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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XI. No. 270 (New Series) SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1936 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THE "conciliation efforts" of the Committee of Thirteen broke down last week, as everyone expected they would—though few had thought the Duce would be quite so insolent in his terms for the opening of negotiations. Even M. Flandin could not stomach it. The League is now left twiddling its thumbs, an impotent spectator of one of the most monstrous crimes in history, as Mr. Mander justly called it in the House of Commons the other day. Sanctions continue, for what they are worth—which is singularly little now. They will not stop the advance of Marshal Badoglio's forces, which are pushing along the road to Addis Ababa, and may be there before many days have passed. Reports of desperate attempts to defend the capital only add a poignant touch to the story of the debacle. There does not appear to be any chance of an immediate check to the victorious Italians. They will indeed have difficulties later if the Ethiopians can keep up a guerilla from the mountains. But at the moment Mussolini looks to be very near the point where he can boast that he is master of "all Abyssinia."

Mussolini and the League

The meeting of the League Council on Monday was a melancholy affair. There was the familiar spectacle of Great Britain and France politely at odds. Nothing affects the French eagerness to let Mussolini finish off his bloody work in Africa and welcome him back as one of the pillars of peace in Europe. M. Paul Boncour was expected to say something that showed respect for the Covenant, but he delivered himself of a lamentable speech—with all the stuffing taken out of it, so it is reported, by the Cabinet in Paris. Mr. Eden spoke strongly—and we have not the least doubt felt strongly. But to blow hot now will not make amends for blowing cold in the past, as the Foreign Secretary was compelled to do, against his will, by his colleagues. It will not undo the damage that was done by the Hoare-Laval episode. It will not overcome the French opposition to an oil embargo, even if it were not anyhow too late for that, when the Committee meets again next month. The chance of effective and concerted action against the aggressor has, in fact, gone, and single-handed action by Great Britain is clearly out of the question. The League's task now is to recover, if it can, its own prestige and unity. After this signal betrayal of Abyssinia, it will be a difficult task.

Plus ça Change

France votes on Sunday, and the result must have some influence on European destinies and the future of the League. One asks whether its weakness and the tension in Anglo-French relations will affect the chances of the Left. In some degree this is probable, for if the League cannot function effectively, then the alternative hope of peace is the specific of the Right—to come to terms with Hitler. But the domestic issue may decide this election —the fight of the Left against deflation and the challenge to finance and big business, involved in its proposals to nationalise the Bank of France and the armaments industry. M. Blum in an interview anticipates that the Socialists will win twenty seats, the Communists twenty-five and the Radicals fifteen. If this rather modest prophecy should be realised, the question remains whether the Front Populaire can survive victory. Its survival is crucial for the preservation of liberty in Europe. The main body of the Radicals will hardly consent to work steadily with Communists, moderate and even patriotic as this party has now become, nor could it agree even with the Socialists on a positive programme that included any measure of nationalisation and involved danger to the franc. M. Daladier, the oratorical spell-binder who leads the Left Radicals, cannot compete with the personal influence of M. Herriot. The figures of Sunday's vote may therefore tell us little about the actual behaviour of the next Chamber. Foreign policy may continue in the old rut, and the election may divert it as little as did the transition from M. Laval to M. Flandin. Indeed in some quarters M. Laval is actually tipped as possibly the next Foreign Minister.

Pan-Americanism

The suggested visit of President Roosevelt to Canada may open an interesting chapter in the history of the American Continent. Two of the subjects that may be discussed raise no novel issues. The President,while Governor of New York State, was eager to co-operate in rendering the St. Lawrence waterway navigable and has never allowed himself to be discouraged. Again, a more comprehensive trade convention between Canada and the U.S.A. would be the natural sequel to the treaty negotiated last year. But it is said that a much bigger political idea may be raised. In the painful effort to work out a policy of neutrality in time of war, Congress and the State Department have considered the possibility of a common formula for the whole American Continent, and this will be discussed at the coming Conference of the Pan-American Union. This Union has never included Canada, nor has it ever become an effective reality, chiefly because the Latins dread the overwhelming weight of their great neighbour. But if Canada could join it, a more healthy balance of forces might be attained within it. The political difficulties are obvious, especially if this issue of neutrality is raised; Canada is bound not only to the Empire, but also, like most of the Southern Republics, to the League. None the less it is probable, as Mr. J. M. Macdonnell argued in Tuesday's *Times*, that the majority of the population of Canada is Pan-American rather than Imperialist or Genevan in sentiment. No change in Canada's orientation is probable at the moment, but it is not unthinkable in a far from distant future.

Mandates and Colonies

The refusal of the Government to give an unequivocal answer on the subject of the transference of mandated territory has touched the British Imperialist on the raw. In Tuesday's debate Mr. Amery reminded the House that Germany had derived only a negligible benefit from the colonies which she possessed before the war. The possession of Tanganyika, however, gives to the British Empire a "measure of strategic security," whilst the idea of sacrificing a people who now live under our flag would arouse those "primal instincts" which no Government is able to control. Mr. Thomas agreed that the economic issue was irrelevant; the vital point was that neither British capitalists, who had invested more than £9,000,000 in Tanganyika since the war, nor native inhabitants could be left to the tender care of the Nazis. But Diehard fears were not allayed by his statement that if the matter were raised it would not be for us alone to determine. The Diehards want the door to be finally closed against concessions; they feel that mandated territories cannot be usefully distinguished from colonies. Britain, it seems, may desire economic benefits from colonial expansion even if Germany cannot. They forget that Hitler's primal instincts are as well developed as Mr. Amery's. We now see a report, which we hope is true, that the Government is to ask Hitler just what he means by "colonial equality." We are not at all keen on "giving Hitler colonies," but we are sure that it is all to the good to get Hitler's cards on the table. Otherwise the injustices of Versailles give him an unlimited opportunity for blackmail.

A Small Debt of Honour

With great events in Europe and Africa demanding one's attention the little question of the future of some 20,000 Assyrians is likely to slip public attention. And yet the very fact that the Assyrians are a small community and that their problem is a manageable one is surely a reason for settling it without further ado. The immediate position is summarised in a letter which we publish this week from Capt. A. D. Macdonald, who was Intelligence Officer for the R.A.F. in Mosul at the time of the massacre of six hundred Assyrians in the summer of 1933. He speaks, as other soldiers who know the Near East speak, with a feeling of shame about our past treatment of this people. They lost their homes because we cajoled them into revolting against the Turks and fighting on the Allied side in the war. After the war we used them to defend us against the Iraqi. When we gave up the Iraq Mandate, the anxiety expressed at Geneva was only with difficulty dispelled by a British reassurance that the Assyrian minority would be safe under Iraqi sovereignty. After we had left, the Assyrians were massacred by Iraqi troops. It was then universally admitted that it was impossible for the bulk of the survivors to remain in Iraq. A number of alternative homes have been sought for these people and now at length a suitable one has been found for them in Syria. There remains the problem of paying the bill. £960,000 has been contributed by the League and the Governments of France, Iraq and Great Britain. Britain, primarily responsible, offers £250,000 and the Government insists that the £180,000 still needed must be privately raised. The Archbishop of Canterbury has therefore made an appeal for this sum and we hope there will be a good

response. But clearly it should not be a matter for private charity. We have heard much recently of international obligations we cannot fulfil. Surely this is a small debt of honour which our own Government should willingly meet.

The Gresford Inquiry

In his fifteen-hour speech at the renewed hearings of the Gresford Inquiry Sir Stafford Cripps raised issues of first-class public importance. He claimed that the management of the mine had been guilty of " a wholesale neglect of safety precautions " and supported his allegations by a number of instances which, he declared, were definite breaches of the law. In many parts of the country output per man in the coal mines has been increased by more than thirty per cent. during the last ten years. Sir Stafford argued that this rapid increase in production has been purchased at the cost of a callous disregard for human life. Victimisation, he suggested, was such that the miners themselves were unable to make effective complaints even when they knew that conditions in the pit were becoming dangerous. Even more serious, however, were allegations against the inspectorate. Formal visits to the mine had taken place, but little attempt, Sir Stafford said, had been made to carry out some of the most obvious investigations. The evidence suggested that the system of inspection and statements from the Minister of Mines based on the findings of inspectors could not command public confidence. Concern for the life of the miners had been subordinated to the interests of the owners and such methods appeared to have received the approval of government officials. In view of the serious nature of these charges the Chief Inspector's Report will be awaited with deep anxiety.

Discharged Prisoners

An interesting problem concerning the relations between the State and charitable organisations performing a social service was discussed at last week's meeting of the Central Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society. Hitherto, the task of making provision for discharged prisoners has been entrusted almost entirely to voluntary bodies, and the Central Society fears that State interference would only restrict its activities. Last year a Government Report drew attention to the lack of co-ordination and uniformity in the working of these societies. In many areas help was confined to a small payment made to the prisoner, and the more important task of finding suitable employment was left to a Society agent, already overburdened with routine duties at the prison. The Report then suggested that the State should make an increased grant and undertake some measure of control. The Societies claim, on the other hand, that during the last three years they have found employment on an average for 8,000 men, or twenty-four per cent. of those coming under their care. In view of the fact that many of the prisoners are unemployable, this represents a high proportion. They argue also that since only a quarter of their revenue comes from the Exchequer, the State has no right to intervene. It is clear, however, that relief payments can form no substitute for finding work, and a reduction in prison costs would probably provide compensation for any increased State expenditure in this direction.

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ARMS BUDGET NUMBER ONE

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S fifth Budget has been received with gloomy resignation by his partisans in the House and the country. Nobody, of course, expected a programme of boons and bonuses. Everyone knew that the cost of armaments was going up and up and up. But 1935, as the Chancellor said, had been an astonishingly good year, and had left him with a nice little surplus ; trade was still booming and the revenue was buoyant. In all the circumstances, while no reliefs were looked for, there were strong hopes that an increase of taxation would be avoided. Mr. Chamberlain has disappointed those hopes. He summarises his yield on the existing basis as £314,000,000 from direct taxation, £420,000,000 from inland revenue, and £42,606,000 from miscellaneous items—a total of £776,606,000. His estimated expenditure for the coming year is £797,897,000, and he is left therefore with a deficit of £21,291,000. Fifteen millions of that he proposes to raise by new taxation—an extra threepence on the income tax, to provide £12,000,000, and an extra 2*d.* per pound on tea, which will give him £3,500,000, Another raid on the Road Fund, to the amount of £5,250,000, will make up all he wants, with a trifle over. Some of the Chancellor's friends congratulate him on his orthodoxy, others on his courage ; but few can do more than damn him with faint praise. His own laconic answer to the critics is that we must put " safety before comfort " —a phrase unpleasantly reminiscent of Göring's famous remark about guns and butter. But does this policy of big armaments—which will be bigger still and will cost yet more in succeeding years—really mean safety ?

So far as the new fiscal expedients are concerned, we cannot see that the extra threepence on the income-tax will do any great damage, especially as it is coupled with substantial concessions and reforms. With the increased children's allowances and personal allowances to married couples, a large host of taxpayers will actually gain. A man with a wife and two children and an income as high as £1,000 a year, will pay less in tax this year than last ; and even on single persons with moderate incomes the extra burden will be trifling. Nor will the rich feel any pinch, though they may, and doubtless will, grumble. An income tax of 4*s.* 9*d.* in the pound, even with surtax on the top of it, still leaves them an adequate margin of comfort—a margin, indeed, that would be deemed far more than adequate in a society not based, like ours, on social injustice. To Mr. Chamberlain's other expedient for raising the yield of income-tax no honest person can demur. By means of the dodges known as " one-man companies " and " educational trusts," evasion has been practised on a large scale. These devices are within the law ; but they are none the less swindling the public, and we shall welcome the proposed legislation to put a stop to them and to benefit the Exchequer by a sum that the Chancellor estimates at £2,500,000 in a full year.

The twopence on tea is another matter. The tea duty suffers from the vice of indirect taxation in general in that its incidence is unfair as between the richer and the poorer consumers. Moreover, it is not a progressive tax ; its amount does not vary with the quality and the price of the tea ; an old-age pensioner or a docker on the dole

(in whose budget tea is a big item and twopence a substantial sum) will be far more heavily hit than the millionaire in Mayfair. If Mr. Chamberlain was merely thinking of how to raise his £3,500,000, he could have found several better ways, and few worse, than this. He might even have gained popularity in his own party by putting his his hand into the Sinking Fund. But presumably his object was to make the poor as well as the rich feel discomfort as the price of their problematical safety. If so, he will certainly be successful. And he is sadly mistaken if he regards as a set-off to this his niggardly offer of £1,000,000 for a development company—"Reconstruction Association, Ltd."—in the special areas. This is not solving the problems of unemployment and distress; it is merely continuing the policy, which the National Government have so steadily pursued, of fooling with them. His raid on the Road Fund is attacked on different grounds. The "starvation of the roads," we are told, is bad policy and improvident finance, as well as unfair to the motoring body. But does it mean "starvation of the roads"? The Chancellor is not really anxious to assassinate his colleague, the Minister of Transport; and he seems, in fact, to have satisfied him that the existing road schemes will go on without curtailment. For our part, we agree with Mr. Chamberlain that the Road Fund, in the form in which it exists, is an "irregularity" which ought to be abolished and replaced by a more normal system of control by the House of Commons.

But it is not merely or mainly the details of Mr. Chamberlain's £798,000,000 Budget that the country is concerned about. His methods of raising the money to meet his deficit have some little merits, and those far larger defects, which we are bound to expect from a conservative Chancellor in a capitalist Government. What is significant and sinister is the reason for the deficit of twenty millions odd this year, and God knows what hereafter. This is not a "prosperity" Budget. It is not a Budget for peaceful development or for remedying social discontents. The social services are, of course, provided for, but only on a basis that leaves them to mark time. The Budget is framed in the fear of war. It is for armaments that we are required to dip our hands into our pockets. It is not necessary here to go into the figures of expansion of Army, Navy and Air Force with which we are confronted. They have grown, they are growing, and it looks as if they will continue to grow while we are ruled by our National Government and other peoples by its like or worse. Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues argue that this enormous provision for defence is a matter of sheer necessity in the present state of the world. They do not admit that their own policy has helped to make the state of the world what it is. But it is the fact. Ever since 1919 British statesmen, by sins of omission and commission, have been throwing away opportunities of establishing European peace. They have done lip service to the League of Nations and betrayed the Covenant at the crucial moment—in the Manchurian affair and in the Abyssinian affair. Their conduct during the long drawn out Disarmament Conference, where a bold and honest lead might have achieved great results, was vacillating, cowardly, and at times even humbug. And to-day Hitler and his re-armed Germany are the inevitable result not merely of French but of British blunders.

Whatever may have been the mistakes in the past, Mr. Chamberlain and his friends still proclaim that they support the League of Nations and put their trust in collective security. Do they? That is precisely what we want to know. Are these armaments, which we are going to pay so heavily for, our contribution to a common system of defence against aggression, as some of the Tories insist? Or are they, as others think and do not trouble to conceal their opinion, designed as an alternative to that system—a hurried preparation for the day when Great Britain has abandoned the League and left the "foreigners" to fight it out amongst themselves. It is a soft-headed notion that we can keep out of any continental mêlée and save our own skin—and the Empire's—by our own bombs and guns and tanks and gas. We are glad that the Government profess not to believe in it. But that is not enough. We want more positive assurances of their zeal for collective security, of their determination to avoid and prevent war, and their desire to check and not to speed up the race in armaments. Mr. Chamberlain has got away with his Arms Budget Number One on the "safety" plea. He, or his successor, unless we misinterpret public opinion, will have a great deal more difficulty with Number Two.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MR. GARVIN

DEAR MR. GARVIN,

Though not often in agreement with you, I have been accustomed to regard you as one of the few great living English journalists. Even the less respectful of younger journalists have admired you. They may have thought your style flamboyant but they have admired your vigour and vitality. They believed that you took trouble to acquaint yourself with facts; that your standard of journalistic ethics was high, and that you minded about certain fundamental decencies which we like to think particularly associated with Britain. We thought you were keen on England standing by her word, and from what you had written about Germany (a country about which you have intimate knowledge) we thought you understood the threat to civilisation that Fascism is.

When Italy first attacked Abyssinia I regretted, but understood, the line you took. You argued that it was too dangerous for us to fulfil our obligations, that war might result from sanctions and that Germany would be the sole beneficiary. I differed from you because for Italy's unprovoked aggression to succeed meant the end of the League. Here was a chance of stopping a war; to have used it would have been a really conspicuous landmark in the progress of mankind. Mussolini had profited by Japan's success, and Hitler had manifestly more to gain if Italian aggression was unchecked than Europe had to lose by the withdrawal of Italy's very dubious support of the League. But I fully realised that there was a pacifist case to be made on the other side, and when Sir Samuel Hoare resigned there was much in his House of Commons apologia that appealed to me. It may be legitimate for the sake of peace to break your word and let down your friends; it was certainly arguable that with Laval in charge in France it was impossible to organise effective joint League action against Italy and that it was courting humiliation to attempt it. All this was frankly stated in this journal at that time. But we pointed out that Sir Samuel Hoare had himself ruled this case out of court by his speech to the Assembly of the League on September 11th, when he committed this country to exactly the opposite policy. That speech rekindled the League into life, brought American opinion back to the side of the League and, incidentally, won an overwhelming victory for the Conservative party at the polls. Sir Samuel Hoare could either make the case of September 11th or the case that he made when he resigned. It was an indecency, and felt to

be such by the whole country, that he could make this speech on September 11th just before the war and the election and agree to betray Abyssinia immediately afterwards.

But later you went much further than Sir Samuel Hoare. You did not confine yourself to pleading that sanctions would prove ineffective and that it was unsafe to embark on them. You actively, and for no easily imaginable reason, took the Italian side. Your articles, which at the beginning made a reasoned case, became every week more impassioned and propagandist. You tried to persuade British people that to bomb the Abyssinians and to destroy their independence would, in some way, promote civilisation. You approved, nay, you extolled aggression. You were not content with arguing that England could not keep her word. You simply disregarded it with a cynicism as complete as Mussolini's own. And now, in your latest utterance, you round off your work with an article which one could have imagined in the *Daily Mail* or in an openly Fascist organ, but which almost everyone I have met, whatever his party, regards with astonishment and disgust in the columns of the *Observer*. That you should gloat over the rout of your political opponents who have advocated sanctions is intelligible enough; it is the ordinary stuff of party warfare. But that you should gloat over the massacre of large numbers of men and women, that you should eulogise the greatness of Italian generals because they have defeated, with all the resources of gas and tank and aeroplane, an almost unarmed people defending their homes; that you should rejoice in the destruction of an independent country whose integrity we as Englishmen have pledged ourselves to defend, is —well—nauseating.

If this had been part of the British Empire which Mussolini had attacked—and the British Empire is gravely menaced by his control of the situation in the Mediterranean and in East Africa—what would you have said? I can imagine the phrases that you would have poured out with all that impetuous wealth of adjective and vehemence of imagery that has made you famous. Would you not have talked, as you did in 1914, about "British honour," about protecting "small nations," about "upholding international law" and the defence of principle against a cynic who regards treaties as mere scraps of paper? Would you have had nothing to say about the protection of helpless black people who had trusted us? No doubt you are prepared to use these phrases again when the next aggression occurs—when Mussolini perhaps encroaches on British interests, or Germany, taking her cue from Italy's success, makes a move beyond her frontiers. But these phrases work in all cases or in none. By championing aggression in one case you have lost your authority as a champion against aggression in other cases. What are ordinary people like myself to say? We have tried to support the League, not always very hopefully, but at least consistently, in the belief that only in a system of organised international law lay any hope for peace. Now that you and your friends have supported Fascist dictators whose object is to destroy that system and return to a state of anarchy in which force is the only law, do you expect us to rally when next you call us to defend the British Empire, to uphold right against might and to fight for the sacredness of international treaties? I think many of us will say "no." KINGSLEY MARTIN

SPAIN'S ATTEMPT TO AVOID REVOLUTION

Barcelona. April 16th, 1936

SPAIN obviously must do something about her poverty and backwardness. The peasants and city workers demand better conditions. The Right reactionaries, when in office, answered these demands with terror but nothing else, thus documenting a fact which is becoming clear to an increasing number of Spaniards, that the reactionaries have lost the right and never had the ability to rule the country. This is a very favourable development, and if the Liberal Republicans, Socialists and Communists behave wisely, the electoral victory which they won exactly two months ago will keep their enemies out of power for a long, long time, perhaps for ever. The Right reactionaries are the large landed proprietors, the Church, the Monarchists and the few big industrials. They are depressed, frightened and disorganised. Their chief hope at the moment is a violent *coup d'état* with the aid of the army and/or the Guardia Civil. This scheme is a measure of their helplessness.

The Left, therefore, have an unusual opportunity. On February 16th, 1936, the Popular Front won a decisive victory. The Socialists and Communists, refusing the responsibility of office, nevertheless gave their support to a minority cabinet of Left bourgeois Republicans led by the Prime Minister, Don Manuel Azaña.

Azaña is an interesting person in an extraordinary interesting situation. Spain needs a reorganisation of her national economy so radical as to amount to revolution. Azaña hopes to make this revolution through evolution and by democratic means. The Socialists and Communists watch sceptically, yet do not withdraw their support for two reasons; the fall of Azaña might bring back the Right; what he does, they believe, prepares the way for them. Azaña evidently thinks differently. He would resent being a Kerensky. He probably wants to create a new and special category for Spain which would correspond neither with Fascism nor Bolshevism nor with the accepted forms of capitalism. "I want," he said to me, "a very Left Republic with certain Socialist innovations."

Eighty per cent. of Spain's 23,000,000 inhabitants live in the villages. If the official class and urban intelligentsia are added, little remains for the industrial bourgeoisie. There is scarcely a middle class. The Church, under the monarchy, was an established institution which helped to keep the people in darkness and illiteracy. The people, however, were not really religious; they hate the Church because it is, in fact, the agents of their oppressors. So far this looks like a description of pre-1917 Russia, and it is this parallel which to many suggests a similar future development. The more run-down and out-of-date a society is the more complete must be its overhauling. The ruling class usually condemns itself to destruction by its own incapacity.

A few days ago, I went back, after two years' absence, to the village of Pueblo del Rio, thirty minutes' ride by electric train from the much-publicised city of Seville. The peasants recognised me immediately. I went into their straw-thatched, mud-walled huts. It had been raining, and pools of water stood in the earthen floors. The people were in rags; they ate as little as ever; "nothing has changed for the better or worse," they reported. In 1934, nevertheless, they had refused money. This time they begged for it. I asked one woman to tell me what they subsisted on. "Bread and black coffee," she said, "fish and bread, peas and boiled rice."

These peasants had nothing, absolutely nothing—a few broken chairs, not even a table to eat on (and why should they have one?); several crude platforms which served as beds. The men worked as day labourers on the estates of large proprietors at five pesetas a day, which is the legal minimum. They worked, on the average, three months a year. "Recently, under Government pressure, there has been more work, but the landlords do not pay. They live in Seville and Madrid and have no money." These folk were resigned, and cowed by life. They did not even blame the estate owners. I have seen Bedouins in the East. These Spaniards lived no better. Many thousands in Spain live the same way. Whole settlements inhabit caves and eat roots and grasses.

These, of course, are the worst and lowest dregs of humanity. But the Yunteros, the men who own a pair of mules and no land, or only a hectare or two, hardly do better. I talked to scores of them. They are undernourished, all of them. Their women of thirty-five look fifty. I asked a mother of four why she had so many children. "They come," she replied, "but I would prefer to have none." In the province of Caceres, the largest in Spain, 61.6 per cent. of the population is illiterate. Other districts are little better. All these

conditions warrant a death sentence upon the Spanish ruling classes.

The Spanish peasantry is the victim of a semi-feudal land-owning aristocracy. There are innumerable vestiges of feudalism and many remnants of feudal psychology in Spain. Agricultural technique is as obsolete as it was in Tsarist Russia, and the standard of productivity is low. Profits are rarely re-invested; the owners have no faith in themselves or their future. There is a vast amount of absenteeism. The curse of Spain is the idle rich and idle poor. I interviewed a landlord who, at the same time, is a high official of the estate owners' association of his region. It was significant that he kept turning his neck while he talked with me in the restaurant, and indeed, our conversation for the first 15 minutes was devoted to a discussion as to whether I would be discreet enough to prevent his being discovered and punished. His class is on the run. He said, "I solemnly affirm that agriculture cannot be improved except by irrigation." (In other words, nothing depended upon, and nothing could be expected from, the proprietors.) "Before the Socialists commenced their propaganda, the peasants lived happily though they were not satisfied. The peasant was born on the land and is accustomed to hard work. He does not know much about the good things of life, though he knows he is not paid enough. Wages are miserable, but it is impossible to pay more now. Agriculture has yielded no profit since 1931 (when the Republic was established) because wages have been forced up and prices fell. We suffer from overproduction"—while Spaniards starve.

The landowning class of Spain, responsible for the lives of 80 per cent. of the population, will not solve—because it cannot solve—the land problem which is the chief Spanish problem. Since there is no peasant market there can be no industry of any account. Spain, which lacks everything, nevertheless counts 700,000 urban unemployed. The population has little money, little consuming power, and the national economy accordingly is derelict.

How does Azaña propose to meet this situation? He admits it is a grave situation which demands an immediate remedy. To date he has done this—landowners have been forced to rent portions of their estates to junteros. In the province of Cáceres, one of the worst, Señor de la Fuente, the representative of the Institute of Agrarian Reform, published a proclamation on March 7th asking landlords to rent land to the junteros. Not one had the sense to reply and conform. The peasants thereupon delivered an ultimatum: "If you will not give us land in 48 hours we will take it." On March 12th the settlement of junteros on the large latifundia commenced. Since then 24,702 junteros in Cáceres have received 69,621 hectares. No land has been expropriated or confiscated. The junteros are share-croppers. It requires thirty to thirty-five hectares in these dry farming regions to keep a family. The junteros have been given an average of three. A few had small pieces of land before—but very few, and in these cases the old strip may be far removed from the new. Some junteros travel five hours on mule-back to their plots. In Badajoz, the second province where the Institute of Agrarian Reform has acted energetically, the peasants, on the night of March 25th, simply occupied the estates, ploughed up their parcels, and asked the Institute to legalise their acts—which it did. Here, too, the junteros rent the land. Forty-five thousand Badajoz junteros have been granted 120,000 hectares, an average of less than three hectares. Elsewhere, the land reform has made little if any progress. It will continue, however. Azaña told me that "when half a million peasants have received land the problem will be solved." Azaña said, too, that he expected to confiscate some estates, presumably those of the grandees, without compensation, under a law which has been in abeyance for several years. He would also allow to revert to the collective possession of villages land which those villages used as collective pastures decades ago.

Whether the Spanish peasant will ultimately own his insufficient farm no one will say. "This is a delicate problem," Señor Ruiz-Funez, the Minister of Agriculture, said to me. Quite. But it has to be tackled some time and the later the worse. For the moment the junteros remain poor share-croppers. Azaña stated in my interview with him that the land reform would strengthen the urban bourgeoisie. He did not mind, because that bourgeoisie was not anti-republican. But will it benefit by the land reform? Perhaps the peasant will be slightly better off when the land reform is finished. That can only mean that he will be slightly better nourished. It does not mean that he will become an active consumer of city goods. Yet this is the crux of the issue. The land reform must be looked upon as a method of enriching the Spanish city and creating new industries. Azaña's measures are too narrow to achieve this.

A member of Azaña's Cabinet suggested to me that the land reform would weaken the Socialist party. It may damp its revolutionary ardour; the scores of Yunteros whom I talked to on a 2,000 kilometre automobile trip showed clearly that they appreciated what was being done for them even when they felt how hopelessly inadequate it was. The Spanish peasantry has been so miserable that it is grateful for the most meagre attention and assistance.

Azaña's land reform accordingly may save Azaña, but he is too big a man to be contented with only that. His reform cannot save Spain. The pity of it is that with its partial appeasement of rural unrest, the reform may emasculate the movement of protest which holds a promise of elevating to power a class that could do for Spain what the bourgeoisie has accomplished in other countries—and then go on to greater heights. If the peasants are satisfied by the present land reform, there will be less compulsion on Spanish politics to carry out the solution which Spain needs if she is to become a happy state.

Here an interesting point arises; Azaña's reform also weakens the landowning classes. They are deprived, unless there is a relapse into reaction, of effective control over their property. Suppose this continues. Suppose, then, that after two or three years the peasants are disillusioned with Azaña's moderate policy. Suppose they demand final expropriation of the estates and collectivisation. Will the Spanish bourgeoisie have the force to resist? Perhaps Spain can effect an economic revolution democratically without a civil war. I do not know. It will be a novum if she does.

Meanwhile, the trend towards collectivisation grows. I visited two collectives. There are others—all organised spontaneously by peasants who knew nothing about Soviet kolhozi. Señor de la Fuente and Señor Jorge Montojo, in charge of the land reform in Caceres and Badajoz respectively, were aware of the inadequacy of their operations. Both saw the wisdom of collectivisation, especially in dry farming, which is so widespread in Spain. Spanish decrees limit the use of machines in agriculture. Extensive dry farming with mechanical equipment would put a new face on the Spanish countryside. The estate owners are unwilling to do this. Individual peasants cannot. Collectives are the logical alternative.

Largo Caballero, the extremely popular leader of the Left Socialists—most of the peasants are Left Socialists—told me he did not believe Azaña would collectivise. The Communists hold the same view. They are afraid, in fact, that the political situation is forcing followers of the conservative Lerroux and the reactionary Gil Robles to seek cover in Azaña's Left Republican party, which as a result will move towards the Right. Will Azaña be hamstrung by his adherents? If yes, and if the masses then reject his policies, a crisis may occur which might conceivably give the reactionaries a chance to return. Or the masses may summon Caballero (who told me he differed little from the Communists) and the Communists to do what Azaña has failed to do. Unless the Rights try a coup, however, this cannot happen soon. "Soon" means twelve months at least.

LOUIS FISCHER

A LONDON DIARY

I GATHER we have not yet heard the last of what is coming to be called "The *Queen Mary* scandal." The facts appear to be as follows. As long ago as last April Mr. Duncan Grant was commissioned by the Cunard Co., not only to paint decorations for the lounge, but to design a carpet and textiles for the upholstery. After consultation with the company's architect he accepted. In the middle of last summer he submitted sketches which were criticised, discussed and approved. In the autumn, when the decorations themselves were nearly complete, the company made difficulties about the scale of the figures; but here again the artist met them and was instructed to continue his work. It was not till after the big designs had been sent to Glasgow in February that Mr. Grant learnt to his amazement that the whole scheme had been rejected, apparently on the mere judgment of a Sir Percy Bates. On this a number of the most eminent critics, museum officials and connoisseurs, headed by the director of the National Gallery, wrote to Sir Percy asking him to reconsider his decision. Sir Percy was pleased to consider his own taste superior to theirs. Adding a piece of impertinence to the public to a private insult, he now proposes that the decorations should be given to the Tate Gallery. Apparently what is not good enough for the Cunard is good enough for the nation. The unfortunate nation, by the way, has already contributed to the building of the *Queen Mary*, and may well think that the opinion of its museum and gallery directors should not be over-ridden by a shipowner.

* * *

One of the oddest things about the coming Presidential election in America is that the Republican Party, which was for more than half a century the strongest political organisation in the world, is unable to put forward any candidate of national standing unless it should decide, against the wish of three Republicans out of four, to fall back on Herbert Hoover. Senator Borah is of course a world figure and he is certain, I am told, to make a splash at the Cleveland Convention in June. But he is the one aspirant in the bunch who cannot be nominated. "A lone wolf" can scarcely become President; Raymond Swing reminded us on the wireless recently of Calvin Coolidge's *mot* when he saw Borah on horseback—that it must pain Borah not to be able to go a different way from his horse. Governor Landon of Kansas is enjoying by far the largest share of newspaper publicity. He is a good, ordinary Mid-Western progressive, so-called, who will have to explain during the campaign why he is accepting the support of the Hearst press. Two newspaper proprietors are in the Republican field—Senator Vandenberg of Michigan and Colonel Frank Knox who owns that important paper, the *Chicago Daily News*. They tell me that the great newspaper owner cannot come within sight of the prize while the small town man might get it. But the one thing that everybody seems certain of is that whoever wins the Republican nomination, Franklin Roosevelt will win the election.

* * *

Raymond Mortimer, who has been on a cruise in the Eastern Mediterranean, happened on an experience which is of topical interest. "On Easter Monday I motored from Chanak to Troy. Parts of the wall of Hector's city (the sixth on the site) are admirably preserved—I say 'city,' but it is no more than a fort, and if as many as a thousand persons were besieged in it they must have had precious little elbow room and been tired of one another before the ten years were over. The continued strategic importance of the site was painfully brought home to us by Turkish soldiery who with shouts, shrill whistles, rifles and surly looks interrupted our meditations on Helen's beauty and the wrath of Achilles. Our attempts to photograph Scamander and the windy plain were unequivocally discouraged and we were expelled while the sun was still high. Troy, of course, is in a demilitarised Dardanelles zone, the reoccupation of which Turkey desires but officially denies having begun. Some of our party who were to have visited the Gallipoli cemeteries were prevented on the polite excuse that the roads were impassable. Bridges on the Troy road were being strengthened, presumably to carry heavy guns, and there is little doubt, I think, that the refortification of the Dardanelles is already being effected. It was pleasant to get back to the warmly welcoming Greeks, for the Turks showed all the signs of a nervous and hypertrophied nationalism. One of them assured me that it was a Christian mistake to believe that the Constantinople mosques had been copied (as they obviously were) from Santa Sophia; it was the architect of Santa Sophia who had copied older Turkish buildings. I tried to conceal my incredulity, though the great church was built seven hundred years before the Turks made their first appearance in history."

* * *

Englishmen in general regard their Civil Service as good wine that needs no bush. They take its virtues for granted, and leave its praises to foreigners. But it has the defects of its qualities, as the latest number of the *Political Quarterly* reminds us in a brilliant batch of articles. There are no less than five of them, all written by men of high authority on their subject, and with valuable constructive criticisms to offer. Amongst these I note particularly Dr. Robson's plea for a greater mobility of personnel, by interchange between posts in Whitehall and the municipalities; Professor Ernest Barker's suggestion of a door being opened to the entrance of some older men (and women); and Mr. Harold Nicolson's argument for the "democratisation" of the Diplomatic Service by its fusion with the Consular Service. Sir Ernest Simon rightly stresses the need of a better training and a better selection of local government officers, and he raises, as do others of the writers, the pertinent question of the kind of education, whether in the universities or elsewhere, that we should look for. It may be, as Dr. Robson thinks, that there is too much of Oxford and Cambridge in Whitehall; it may be that there is not enough in the Town Halls. It may also be that the "culture" of our public servants in all spheres should be supplemented by some more practical social study. Sir Ernest Simon adduces from his municipal experience a very cogent argument about the importance of statistics. But the national and local services which were developed in the last century are not the whole of the story. The twentieth century has seen the growth of a number of new bodies, comprising what are called the "semi-public" services—the London Passenger Transport Board, the B.B.C., the Central Electricity Board, Agricultural Marketing Board and the like. These will multiply with the demand for public control and the spread of the collectivist principle. The problem of their personnel—which is the subject of a special article by Dr. Herman Finer—is one that ought to be tackled without delay.

* * *

Superstition always grows when men have lost their old faith and not yet found anything solid to put in its place. One of the many symptoms of this in England to-day is the recrudescence of astrology. I sometimes wonder that the law against fraudulent fortune-telling is not extended to cover the astrological nonsense that appears in some commercial newspapers. It is an easy game. I suppose I could make a substantial salary by writing a column about the probably unsettled state of the political weather deduced from the position of the planet Mars during the next month, and about the singular astrological fact that to-morrow is "a good day for buying." (This prophecy should happily coincide with advertisements of sales at West End stores.) But let the astrologers speak for themselves. They have been in conference at Harrogate—three hundred of them. I am sure some of them are quite sincere and I notice from the *Times* report that one professor went so far as to say, "if astrology is spoken of as a science it must be with the greatest reserve and safeguards." Mr. Carter

thought that Signor Mussolini's horoscope was powerful in some respects and was "likely to give him a good run for his money."

Herr Hitler, he thought, had a more conciliatory and constructive type of horoscope . . . a special feature of King Edward's reign would be a closer relation between England and Russia. Although the King's horoscope did not suggest that all would be tranquil at home or abroad, it did show that there would be much prosperity in certain directions.

A lady said that:

Astrological influences would make June a difficult month. If we live through this time without an upheaval of some kind, we shall be lucky. Fire and accidents by rail and road are quite possible. There will be much muddled thinking and no sound decisions. We can only hope that no fresh pacts or treaties will be made about this time, for they will be doomed to failure.

Another lady "advocated the use of astrology to ensure the better training of school children," and speakers were bold enough to predict

a peaceful settlement of the European situation; an increase in Russia's power; drastic changes in the government of Italy; and a harassing time for President Roosevelt.

Well, I'm going to take up prophecy, too. I predict an increase in armaments, a speech by Mr. Winston Churchill, changes in the French Government (after the elections), a cold April followed by an increase in the consumption of ice-cream.

* * *

Great broadcasters, like other geniuses, are partly born and partly made. John Hilton has both the natural gifts and the experience to make him an ideal broadcaster—humorous, serious, fair-minded, civilised, understanding, "on the level." Recently, when he was talking to Tom, Dick and Harry (including Peggy, Joan and Kate), he found himself in the middle of the football mêlée, and having read the report of the Commission on Lotteries and Betting, he noticed that about £800,000 is sent every week in the season to the Pools, but that the Commissioners had never inquired from Tom, Dick and Harry why they spent their money in this way. So he asked people to tell him, and he has now written an admirable little book called *Why I Go in for the Pools* (Allen and Unwin, 1s.). It contains extracts from the three hundred letters he received in reply. They are extremely informative letters, and as it is desirable that people who want to know what England is really like should read them for themselves, I will not quote. You will find all the reasons for betting here that rich people deplore among the poor and defend on the Stock Exchange. And you will find one, constantly recurring, that applies to the poor and not to the rich. The poorer people are, the less security they have, the more hopeless they feel about the prospect of saving enough money to get out of their difficulties, to get a decent holiday, or to pay their bills in times of illness. So the poorer they are, the larger proportion of their income they spend in betting. It keeps hope alive. It might always mean a windfall and delirious happiness. And as some of them argue, if they don't win they have enjoyed hoping that someone else, who needs it, will get the windfall.

* * *

A friend who frequently visits Germany tells me that Italian Fascism is now extremely unpopular with the Nazis. Hitler has always claimed to have saved the Reich from Bolshevism. My friend has recently heard a new boast—that Hitler saved Germany from Fascism! CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Miss S. A. Ogilvie.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Mr. Eden's idealism shocks the realism of practical men. He condemns Italy for the use of mustard gas, forgetting that the crime of using it can only be exceeded by the wickedness of failing to be prepared to use it as a reprisal.—Letter in *Times*.

Mrs. Pomeroy demonstrates the only safe and permanent way of banishing unsightly hair by the removal of five hairs Free.—Advt. in *Morning Post*.

The third is a large white panama with a very narrow ribbon of navy blue petersham tied in a neat little bow in front with a flag stuck through the bow. This is called "Follow the Fleet," and the flag can be changed according to whichever way the patriotic wind is blowing.—*News Chronicle*.

Well, I have had a letter from a friend in a Colony, where he exercises some sort of jurisdiction over natives, telling me that he has discovered an alternative to prison—namely, sharp fielding-practice at cricket for an hour.—*Daily Mail*.

I was glad to see "These Foolish Things" defended by Mr. H. Foster as one of those dance-tune lyrics that are "really splendid." The theme is a noble and pathetic one, being all about the foolish little mementoes which remind him of her. And I was only surprised that Mr. Foster did not quote that very beautiful line which occurs quite early in the lyric: "A cigarette with lipstick traces." Considered in its poignant context, this line is always good for a lump in the throat. There's something so unutterably sad about it.—Letter in *Radio Times*.

Capt. F. Owen Lewis, moving a vote of confidence in Mr. Baldwin, described him as the greatest Prime Minister England had ever had.—*Times*.

A remarkable story was disclosed by his solicitor when Herbert Albert Brooker, an electrician, was bound over yesterday at Sevenoaks, Kent, on a charge of attempting to defraud a firm of bookmakers of more than £6,000. . . . After Mr. L. H. House, defending, had made his statement on Brooker's behalf, the chairman of the Bench said that, as Brooker came from a very respectable family, the Bench would deal leniently with him.—*Daily Telegraph*.

Most probably you have already heard of The White House Fairy Corner Club—the Club to which nearly 1,500 of the best known children in the country belong. They include two great-nieces of Her Majesty, Queen Mary; two nieces of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester; the children of Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, and other members of the British aristocracy, and the children of families whose names have helped to make the history of this land. The White House Fairy Corner Club is not a snobbish Club—it is anything except that; but there *is* something about it that makes parents interested, and its appeal to little people is a very real one.—*Moderna*.

FROM BRIGHTEST AFRICA

CONTENT is rife in Tanganyika and unless something drastic is done to allay the mischief, profits may fall. The situation cannot be better expressed than in the words of the Acting Chief Secretary in a speech to the Legislative Council.

"The cash resources of the native, as a result of an excellent harvest, have reached a high level; in fact, I would say a dangerously high level, since there is the risk that, in certain parts of the country, he may find himself in possession of more money than he knows what to do with and, in consequence, be tempted to sit back and idle for as long as his earnings last.

It follows that the urge to work, whether for himself or others, must be accompanied by the urge to spend, and we must neglect no opportunity of encouraging new wants and of preaching a higher standard of living among the native population, for these are the only real stimuli to labour. I believe that immense possibilities exist for enterprising traders in the densely settled areas around the lake. Traders, therefore, will be doing a real service to the country if they can whet the native's appetite for imported goods, not for cheapjack rubbish which, I admit, has served its purpose in the last few years, but for more durable commodities which, at present a luxury, will come to be regarded as necessities.

Without some such steps, backed, of course, by constant propaganda in favour of a better style of living, I foresee all sorts of difficulties ahead; not least amongst them an aggravation of the existing shortage of labour for the mining industry, which is already causing the Government no little concern."

This extract is embodied in a letter from the Chief Secretary at Dar-es-Salaam addressed to the London Chamber of Commerce and re-circulated by the latter to its members.

The letter reiterates the view that unless the spending capacity of the native is commensurate with his earnings there is the risk that the native, with more money at his disposal than is required for his needs, may cease to be industrious. Traders here are in turn assured that they would be doing the country a service if they would interest themselves in the matter and the Chamber is asked to advise what steps should be taken to cope with the situation.

Plenty of advice should be forthcoming from this end. The diagnosis is simple, the disease being a well-recognised one. It is a form of mental atrophy known in advertising jargon as *verdammte Bedürfnislösigkeit*. The reference to the mining industry is significant since the complaint was widespread in the British coal-mining industry before the war when it caused extreme mental anguish to very reverend deans in the northern dioceses. It was axiomatic at that time that all attempts to raise the coal-miner's wage would be frustrated by his automatic decision to take out the advantage in leisure. So much so that a stock examination question in economics was the construction of an indifference curve indicating the point at which the coal-miner tended to hand in his lamp and take the whippet for a run. It is significant that, although the question was intended to be theoretical, most candidates made the tangent touch the curve early on Thursday afternoon. It is one of the few beneficial results of the war that this particular evil has been eradicated from the British coal-mining industry and deans have been able to accept calls from southern dioceses with a tranquil conscience. The major remedy in the absence of a bloody war,* which effectively eliminates the propensity of the working class to sit back on its haunches, is to introduce the great principle of white culture, the *primum mobile* of our man-milliner civilisation, namely, keeping up with the Umslopogaases. To this end it might be worth while to subsidise the publication of a native illustrated *journal de snobisme* which would state emphatically what is not worn this season and what else is not being done in the best Kraals. The Governor-General, or the equivalent viceregal functionary of the territory, could establish a special enclosure for Tanganyika Cup week and issue select invitations to native chiefs and a strictly limited number of wives.

Tourists to the Victoria Falls have been astounded at the sight of dusky belles parading in crinolines and carrying parasols of the 'nineties and have learnt that these adornments were carefully preserved legacies of early Rhodesian pioneering days. It is possible that this conservatism in Central Africa is a misinterpretation of missionary teaching with undue emphasis on the duty of man to rest content in the lot unto which it has pleased God to call him. It should be made quite clear that although the Church may have certain views on the subject the last word is with the Economic Advisory Board of the Legislative Council.

Above all, the territory should import a corps of high-pressure salesmen and advertising experts. We touch on delicate matters here, but if there are not half a dozen complaints from which four out of every five of the Blackamoors suffer, then their state must be more primitive and degraded than has ever been suspected. There must be tremendous scope for the sort of campaign which explains why Jane got no partners at a dance until her best girl friend told her the reason. The most cursory glance at an anthropological treatise will show that a great deal could be done to make the tropics more brassiere-conscious: in this connection the surplus billboards of the defunct Empire Marketing Board could be shipped over and used to display those alluring posters which cause so many of us to step off the escalator with the wrong foot. Do the tribesmen know that they can learn the ukulele, the art of public speaking or a foreign language in ten lessons? Do they use laxatives gentle in action and pleasant to the taste? Does the female section employ a face cream made of deep penetrating and specially processed oils which keep the skin young with an exciting, lovable smoothness? Has it had its photograph enlarged in a free gilt frame? Has it seen the booklet which shows that women can attract men by using the simple laws of man's psychology? If the same product which at this end guarantees a permanent wave cannot be sold at that end as an effective eliminator of the woolly kinks in native locks then advertising is a lost art. If the Legislative Council will initiate a campaign on these lines there is no reason why the territory should not achieve the full status of white civilisation, with 20 per cent. unemployment and a ten gallon per head consumption of patent medicines.

Of course, there are some unsophisticated people who would like the native to have a bicycle because he is happier with one than without one. But this is an over-simplification of the problem due to ignorance of the fascinating type of analysis which demonstrates that the *raison d'être* of the bicycle is that it induces the native to work for mine-owners so that the latter can acquire an automobile made at this end by workers endeavouring to obtain the wherewithal to visit cinemas, the proprietors of which hope to go on cruises in order to come back and tell their friends how funny the natives look riding bicycles. Even this is short-circuiting the problem, for the chain of repercussions ought finally to lead us to the people around whom and for whom the whole system revolves. But only a few persons have arrived at this solution and of those some have retired into monasteries, others have gone about with a perpetual grin on their faces, and one went back to Russia to start something quite different.

By the way, there must be no question of handing back the territory to the Germans—they might exploit the natives.

G. L. S.

* The propagation among the natives of the belief that the more copper they produce the quicker the white races will convert it into munitions and proceed to annihilate each other is perhaps too subtle at this stage.

CLEAR AS MUD

Mandated territories are not colonies . . . they are only part of the British Empire in what I may call a colloquial sense.—NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, House, April 8th.

"COLONIES are colonies," said the Chancellor,
The dark horizon cleared.
"Mandates are mandates," said the Chancellor,
The Commons rose and cheered.
There's not a palm or a fellah,
Kopje or wallah or crag
But is for ever the Empire
When once it is under the flag.

But mandates may fly to the Nazis
As soon as the League allows,
And the Cameroons long for the Nazis
As the spinster longs for a spouse.

"Colonies are not mandates," said the Chancellor,
"They shall not be transferred.
"Mandates are not colonies," said the Chancellor,
"Whoever said so, erred."
Let the Nazis possess Tanganyika,
That an era of peace may begin,
Tanganyika pants after the Nazis
As the butterfly pants for the pin.

Samoa is athirst for the Nazis
As thirsts for Fascisimo the Ras,
And Togoland turns to the Nazis
As the suicide turns to the gas.

SAGITTARIUS

ALL SERENE

I AM sometimes tempted to believe that astrology is a true science after all. For one thing, we live in the most scientific age in history, and we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that this fanatically scientific age is as deeply in love with astrology as with psycho-analysis. Astrology has not as yet produced a

Freud, or a Jung, but this only makes its acceptance by our scientific century all the more remarkable. It is a science that has obviously made its way by its own merits. Not only has it been unassisted by men of genius: it has progressed in spite of the opposition of many of them. That suggests that there must be something in it.

I found an even more convincing reason for believing in astrology, however, when I opened one of my Sunday papers and came on an astrological prediction concerning April the 20th, my birthday. As I read sentence after sentence, the will to believe became stronger and stronger in me. The stars were in their most benevolent mood, and to doubt their word would have seemed like doubting the word of a generous friend. The first sentence was one of the most persuasive I have ever read. "There is no end," it said, "to the pleasant things that one might say concerning the probabilities in your life for twelve months ahead." The very moderation of the astrologer's statement suggests the cool, cautious brain of the man of science. If he had wanted merely to flatter me, he would have said, not "probabilities," but certainties. I should in a sense have liked "certainties" better, but I should not have thought the astrologer so scientific if he had written it. As it is, "no end to the pleasant things one might say" induced a glow of anticipation that was to me more convincing than any argument.

The next sentence at first rather alarmed me. "The influence of Venus," it declared, "is dominant." Apparently, however, this did not mean that everybody born on the 20th of April was to emulate the exploits of Falstaff and Don Juan for twelve months to come. The Venus who is to dominate is Venus in her most respectable mood. As the astrologer explains: "First of all, you will suddenly discover that the world isn't half a bad place after all, and that the people around you are far more decent that you thought." This is certainly very unlike the Venus to whom I wrote a poem about forty years ago, but I am not sure that she is not preferable. The goddess who in the year 1936 can persuade one that the world is not half a bad place after all, is a miracle-worker worthy of reverence. I have often myself maintained that it is not half a bad place, but that was only after not having read a newspaper for twenty-four hours or after having deliberately forgotten some of the most eminent of my contemporaries. If I were a leader-writer with a knowledge of what is going on, I should be compelled to affirm that the world is a very bad place indeed. Not being a leader-writer, however, and having only a nodding acquaintance with politicians and people of that kind, I can deceive myself occasionally and without difficulty into believing that the world is an excellent place. I thought so on Monday morning as I lay in bed and listened to the first cuckoo. I thought so as I read the last story in *Young Men in Spats*. I thought so when I heard some one describing somebody else as "faintly Unitarian." I usually think so when in the company of people whom I have known for a long time. It is the pleasantest of illusions and the easiest to achieve, provided that trouble remains round the corner or at a reasonable distance.

For twelve months, it appears, I am to enjoy this illusion, and "various factors contribute towards this." For one thing "relatives and friends will be doing well financially." I should be still more convinced that the world is not half a bad place if it were I myself, and not merely my relatives and friends, who was to be doing well financially. Still, I am no dog in the manger, and I would rather see my own relatives and friends becoming rich than anybody else's relatives and friends. This generous emotion the astrologer would ascribe to the dominance of Venus. For does he not declare: "You will get a love-everybody complex which lasts quite a long while."

Here I find myself becoming a little sceptical. There is one man whom I cannot conceive myself loving. He never did me any harm: he never even did me a good turn; but I cannot like him. I like many worse men than he, but him I can no more like than I can like parsnips. Shall I find the world a more excellent place, I wonder, if the stars compel me to become bosom-friends with him? Shall I be happier if I live for twelve months in a warm muzz of universal goodwill, beaming benevolently even after the motorist who has nearly smashed me by roaring into the roundabout as though he were on the track at Brooklands? There must be a mild pleasure in irritating other people by going about the world with a sweet and sickly and intolerable smile. But I doubt whether the smilers are happier than the scowlers. There is a fierce delight to be got from scowling.

Even so, I hope the astrologer's prediction about the love-everybody complex will prove true. The 20th of April is not only my birthday; it is also Hitler's; and, if Hitler will undertake to love everybody for twelve months, I am prepared to sacrifice myself and do the same. It may be that the influence of the stars was already at work when Hitler made his proposals for a twenty-five years' peace. Since his birthday that influence must have become immensely stronger, and who knows but that Hitler, however he may struggle against the love-everybody complex, is even now finding himself hopelessly in its grip? I can imagine him under this impulse hurrying in his car from concentration camp to concentration camp, ordering the guards to open the gates and release the prisoners, and making the most wonderful speeches to the newly-liberated Jews and Communists.

"My friends," he would say, "we have misunderstood each other in the past. My eyes have been opened. I can now see that you are almost human. All my life I have tried not to love Jews, but now at last I must confess the attempt has ended in abject failure. Who can deny that we are all brothers, subject to hunger and cold, to weariness and pain, to love and death? I love my friend Goebbels, but if Goebbels tells me that I must not love Jews, I will go on loving him, but I will put him in prison. I ask nothing better than to be able to embrace you one by one. My heart is bursting with a love-everybody complex. Heil, Thaelmann!"

How the sun would shine in Europe if this were to happen! For this would be only the beginning of things. Hitler has already begun to love England, and early in May, if the stars are to be trusted, he will have begun to love France. By June, under the pressure of the love-everybody complex, he will be stretching out his arms towards Russia in a gesture of fraternal affection. By July he will be denouncing the League of Nations, because it gives no scope to the love all nations should feel for each other. By August he will be stumping the capitals of the world in a whirlwind campaign to proclaim the necessity of love between nation and nation, between man and man. It is my solemn conviction that if everybody had been born on the 20th of April, all the problems of the world could be solved within the next twelve months. Meanwhile, those few of us who were born on that date must do our best.

Luckily, during the year we shall not merely be doing good to others; we shall also be having a good time ourselves. "Just plain simple good luck," say the stars, "will be strongly at work in most of your concerns and affairs." The very golfer will have reason to rejoice that he was born on the 20th of April. "The 'rabbits' of the playing-fields will develop mightily." If you have a soul above games, your case is still better. "Mentally (as distinct from emotionally) the inspiring influence of Mars is at work. This will drive you on to do or dare in your work and in all that concerns your personal ambitions." To do or dare? I never did or dared in my life, and it will be a novel experience. I hope it will be a pleasant one and that it will not involve such things as flying to the North Pole or interrupting Fascist meetings or telling the man I don't like what I really think of him. I forgot, however. By that time, I shall have got to love him, and shall be able to assure him that he is not half so foul a creature as I once thought he was.

Who could help envying a man born on the 20th of April? "A bland atmosphere of peace settles down in your family affairs. Papa will love mama, and neither papa nor mama will

display those usual antagonisms to lovers and sweethearts." Happy in the home, happy on the golf-course, happy at work, and with all creeds, classes and nationalities loving each other like fury—what more could a man of modest ambitions ask of life? "A bland atmosphere of peace." It is a beautiful phrase, conjuring up a picture of the land of heart's desire. If it comes true, I for one will join the ranks of the scientists and study astrology. Meanwhile, hail Venus! And hail Mars—so long as he behaves himself. Y. Y.

Correspondence

A LETTER TO AN ENGLISHMAN

[The following letter from a leading French Senator was sent to an English friend who wrote asking for a clear statement of the foreign policy of the Front Populaire.]

DEAR ——. I want, briefly but with the utmost sincerity, to answer the questions that you have put to me. Frank explanations between Englishmen and Frenchmen can alone diminish the misunderstandings and dissipate the prejudices that arise not so much from theoretical differences as from differences in national temperaments, and even more from the lack of any serious efforts at mutual understanding.

You have asked me whether all the parties belonging to the Front Populaire are determined wholeheartedly to support the League of Nations. I can assure you that they are; there is no point upon which they are more agreed or to which they have given more thought. All the Republicans and all the Democrats of France believe that, in spite of the traditions, interests and sometimes even the survival of racial hatreds that divide them, there exists a real solidarity among the peoples that can be expressed by an international organisation of justice, capable of putting the forces of all at the service of the rights of each. This magnificent enterprise has been met and is still being met by troublesome obstacles to which—let us admit it—France and perhaps also Great Britain have sometimes contributed.

You are right in supposing that fear of a general European war has played a part in the hesitant attitude of our Governments. As soon as the Italo-Abyssinian conflict broke out, newspapers and politicians who for years had denounced the pacifist timidity of our Left-wing partisans of the League of Nations began to sow the seeds of alarm by their daily cry of "Sanctions mean war." I do not deny that a part of French public opinion was won over to this point of view. But isn't it true that after the events of the 7th of March, 1936, a similar outcry provoked a similar reaction in your country?

France, as much as England, desires peace. But it is useless merely to hope for this peace with trembling heart; the essential conditions for it must be realised. We do not believe that it can be solid and durable for us if it is not also guaranteed for other nations, both great and small, rich and poor. It is impossible to make a partial war. As soon as it breaks out anywhere in Europe, it will spread to the Rhine, to the Danube, to the East and to the Mediterranean. No country can flatter itself that it can, for long, remain a spectator and reap the profits of an outbreak of war, even though it be far from its frontiers.

Peace is indivisible; security is collective. It would be short-sighted egoism on the part of any Occidental country to imagine itself safe from a war because it happened to break out in the East.

Does this mean that we do not wish to negotiate with Hitler, that we are disinclined to consider his proposals? We should be singularly guilty if we let slip an opportunity of building a firm foundation for peace, if we refused, for the sake of this, to sacrifice our pride or even our interests. But peace must not be a precarious favour, a privilege capriciously accorded to some at the expense of others. "Peace for all, by the will of all" is the slogan that expresses the long-standing aspirations of the Left-wing parties in France.

It is only thus that peace will achieve its full efficacy and moral value. The formation of the Front Populaire was due to a spontaneous and lively movement which grew up among the French people in order to defend themselves against the danger of dictatorship, which they believed to be threatening them, and to safeguard their civil liberties and international peace. We do not wish to interfere with the politics of other countries, but we are convinced that free people are the best workers for peace. They condemn despotism and violence at home as well as abroad.

As the democracies, aware of their responsibilities, draw closer together and understand one another better the community of their ideals and their mutual agreement will increase the strength which they will be able to put at the service of European and world peace. The cordial and confident collaboration of Great Britain and France should prove a decisive factor in the organisation of peace.

T. STEEG,
(Sénateur de la Seine,
Ancien Président du Conseil)

THE NATION'S GREATEST ASSET

SIR,—From his special vantage ground Mr. Orwin has ably invited attention to the need of national ownership of the nation's greatest material asset, the soil under its feet and upon which it finds itself dependent. But what does Mr. Orwin mean when he says that the private ownership of land is not only legally right but morally right? The owner enjoys an acquired legal right, and as an individual cannot be regarded as immoral. At the same time, Mr. Orwin makes it very clear that the working of the law which allows it is so mischievous that it is obvious the law must itself be immoral or unmoral. This ethical side of the issue is important. New law has to be enacted to right the factor of ownership, and most of the best things done by Parliament are, in the ultimate, done in response to the ethical OUGHT.

The case for national ownership as a matter of common sense has been overwhelming ever since men of vision gained experience of the predatory claims of personal owners of land wanted for transit schemes, drainage schemes, water supply schemes, health protection schemes, housing schemes, public park schemes and all other planning for the common good demanding control by Britons of bits of the land upon which the same Britons had been born; let alone ever since open-eyed observers have seen so clearly what a relatively poor fist is made of cultivating that land as a profitable labour buying and selling business as compared with what it might and should be as a co-ordinated concern, organised in a civic service atmosphere with a civic service purpose.

As you, Mr. Editor, point out so appositely, Mr. Orwin "stops at a point from which many of us will be anxious to push on." As with patriotism, public ownership plus landlord watchfulness is "not enough." If it were, there should be forthcoming an extra good story of farming prosperity on Crown and County Council land. It would be helpfully interesting if Mr. Orwin (again from his vantage ground) could tell us to what extent this existing public ownership contributes to:

(*a*) Maximum wealth production for national ends with minimum waste of material and of men.

(*b*) A really worth-while life for the worker and family.

(*c*) A really worth-while social life for village and hamlet.

(*d*) Utilisation of ample capital in this big productive job.

(*e*) Utilisation of elected or selected brains and experience of managers and men with "its best from every acre" as the objective of co-ordinated culture of farm, parish, district, county and country in step-wise association, keeping all the present farmers who care to stay with the industry.

Such systematised culture of land would spell also culture of men. In any case, the rent paid must be equitable; but just what channel the rent immediately passes through is of small importance compared with what becomes of the culture of land and men. Use the control power already on the land under the hats of the best farmers and best men entrusted with a big job with a big and inspiring purpose and not much Whitehall control or inspectorial bossing would be called for. As usual, the way of salvation is simple and therefore hard of acceptance! JESSE HAWKES

Hemel Hempstead.

SIR,—One is left with a feeling of bewilderment after reading Mr. Orwin's two articles on land nationalisation.

Apparently the land is to be purchased at market value; that is to say at a value which in the case of agricultural land has been inflated by the agricultural marketing schemes, quotas, and import duties, and in the case of urban and suburban land inflated by the holding of land out of use.

To make ends meet, therefore, the rents to be charged nust be based upon these inflated values, and the thing that is most urgently needed, a reduction of rent, must be put off indefinitely.

Yet Mr. Orwin promises two definite benefits from this

transaction, both relating to agricultural land. The one is that the revenue from mining royalties, building land and so on would subsidise the agricultural part of the property. The other is that, as the State would pay no income tax or death duties, it would use the sum which the ordinary landowner would have paid in such taxes for the administration and development of the land.

If the former argument is true we may use the income from nationalised property for any purpose we please, and leave the bondholders to whistle for their interest. The latter argument assumes that the State, after paying to the bondholders an income equal to that which they enjoyed as landholders, will still have left an amount equal to the income tax plus death duties. If it were true, why not nationalise everything, and the State will then automatically have the whole of the income tax, surtax, and death duties provided for it by the bondholders, and will in addition have all these revenues miraculously provided for it a second time out of the nationalised property?

Comment may also be made on Mr. Orwin's "Tax and Buy" policy. The landlord is to make his own valuation of his property. The State will buy at this figure or use it as a basis of valuation for income tax and local rates. It is imagined that the owner will be caught in a cleft stick. But Mr. Orwin says that a beginning would be made with land and property in rural areas and with undeveloped land in urban areas, because the urgent need is to acquire control over land that has not yet been exploited.

But agricultural land at present pays no rates, and unused land in any case pays neither rates nor income tax. The threat of "tax or buy" is therefore an empty threat. Moreover, as the policy is declared that certain classes of land are wanted immediately, the owner will certainly place a high value upon them, knowing that his risk in the gamble is a very slight one.

It is said that one purpose of these proposals is to secure to the community such values attaching to land as arise out of the needs of the community. The whole value of land arises out of the needs of the community, and this proposal automatically ensures that the value for an indefinite period will be mortgaged to the bondholders. Thus the community will be defeated of the expectation it might have entertained of some restoration of community values to the people through a well-devised scheme of land-value taxation and rating.

Must we conclude that "agricultural economics" involves some fourth-dimensional calculus beyond the ken of ordinary economists?

94 Petty France, S.W.1. F. C. R. DOUGLAS

THE ASSYRIANS

SIR,—The fate of the Assyrians in Iraq is once more in the balance. An appeal has been made by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the sum of £180,000 to rescue this homeless and unhappy group of Christians from the intolerable position in which it has been placed by our political ineptitudes while we were preparing Iraq for independence.

In 1924 Hakkiari, the hereditary homeland of the Assyrians, passed irrevocably to Turkey, and it became clear that the future of the Assyrians would have to be assimilation within the frontiers of Iraq. From that moment it was imperative that we should handle the Assyrians in a manner which promised that such assimilation could eventually be achieved. Instead of pursuing that policy we employed a large and influential body of Assyrians as Imperial troops for the safeguarding of our air bases and the suppression of local revolt, and in doing this we permitted among them, if we did not actually foster, the growth of a loyalty exclusively directed towards ourselves, and a corresponding antipathy to those who were even then theoretically, and were soon to become actually, their rulers. The Assyrians proved to be excellent soldiers, and their assured loyalty to British interests in face of any local political crisis which might arise relieved us of those misgivings which accompany reliance on locally raised troops. Over the years we appeared to be blind to the fact that those very loyalties were earning for the Assyrians in the minds of the nationally-minded Iraqis the undesirable reputation of bolstering up the Mandatory Power to Iraq's disadvantage, and of being a race whose political sympathies were directed against Iraq's interests.

On our surrender of the Mandate power fell into the hands of those whom by our negligence we had permitted the Assyrians to anger. In 1933 a minor incident was credited by the animosities of the national elements with a significance far beyond the realities of the occasion, and was made to appear as an insurrectionary threat by the Assyrians to the security of the Iraq State. The repressed hatred of years burst forth and found vent in a suppression and massacre so brutal as to shock the world. Meanwhile, the Eastern people observed the spectacle of Britain impotently expostulating, while those who had come to be looked on as her hired bravoes were put to the sword.

Since then it has been clear that there can be no future for the Assyrians in Iraq. A scheme for their removal to Syria offers us the opportunity of making reparation for the tragic misfortunes which have befallen the Assyrians since they entered into relationship with us. The Syrian scheme gives promise of a healthy, reasonably prosperous and secure future for a people who have suffered from hideous mishandling over twenty wretched years. Money is the only difficulty. The League of Nations and the Governments of France, Iraq and Great Britain have contributed between them £960,000, a sum which falls short of the amount required by £180,000.

The British Government is strenuous in disclaiming that degree of responsibility which might give grounds for supposing that it should increase its present contribution of £250,000, and has assured us that that sum represents its very last word in the matter. It has therefore been found necessary to resort to private charity and the Archbishop of Canterbury has put himself to bridging the gap.

His appeal is one which cuts right across political parties and it should evoke response from all men of goodwill. It is at once national and personal in its range, and it is to be hoped that the money will be forthcoming, not only from those who are moved by the spectacle of distressed and helpless humanity, but also from the many who regard the vindication of Britain's good name in the East as being something which is still worth a personal sacrifice.

A. D. MACDONALD

[This letter is discussed in our Comments above.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

EQUAL PAY AND FAMILY ALLOWANCES IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

SIR,—Your correspondent, Anne Protheroe Jones, is angry because I urged that Family Allowances should accompany Equal Pay. She calls this suggestion "a red herring." But a red herring may be useful if it diverts the hounds from a false scent into the path taken by the fox. For fifteen years and more, Equal Pay in the Civil Service has been ably and strenuously advocated, with the result of two victories—in the division lobby. But according to a recent leaflet issued by the Civil Service Equal Pay Committee entitled *The Flight from Equal Pay* "the measure of Equal Pay enjoyed in the Civil Service has steadily decreased over a period of recent years." On the other hand, in Australia, the Irish Free State, and nearly every European country, the pay of men and women civil servants is equal and is accompanied by some form of family allowance or marriage bonus. Your correspondent can hardly deny that the burden of family dependency, though some women share it and many men do not, is on the whole far greater upon men than upon women; nor that this fact, even if it seems to her irrelevant, is in the mind of the public and of the Government one of the main justifications for unequal pay. Why then does it "reflect no credit" on me to point out that, while family dependency is a reality, unequal pay is an unscientific and unjust way of providing for it and that the real solution is where other countries have found it—in equal pay *plus* family allowances? To acknowledge an obstacle and show how to meet it is usually better propaganda than to pretend that it doesn't exist.

Your correspondent makes other unproved assumptions—as, for example, that if the Civil Service gave equal pay, industry would follow suit. Does she really believe that, or think it possible without family allowances? And has she ever calculated the cost?

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE

A VILLAGE COLLEGE

SIR,—Much public attention is now being focused in England on the design and equipment of school buildings. In this field very little has been accomplished as compared with the achievements in other countries, though amongst education authorities at home Cambridgeshire has already provided at Sawston an example, on traditional lines, of an educational building which adds to the dignity of the countryside. It is now being more readily agreed that the schools, amongst the first of public buildings, should be works of architectural science and art, and that if this can be brought about the rising generation will be provided with the best

environment from the point of view of health and with the most potent instrument of education in architecture.

We understand that the Cambridgeshire County Council are about to establish a Village College at Histon, and we desire on behalf of a body of subscribers to offer to the Council a sum to meet the extra cost involved of not more than £1,200 (calculated at 6 per cent. on a capital expenditure of £20,000) in order that the building should be planned and designed as a model of its kind and on condition that for this purpose the design should be entrusted to the architectural firm of Messrs. Maxwell Fry and Walter Gropius. We are encouraged to make this offer because the institution at Histon will be not only a school but, in addition, a centre of adult education and recreation.

We would point out that the London County Council, at the suggestion of the Council for Art in Industry (the Chairman of which is one of our contributors), appointed by the President of the Board of Trade, has consented to allow one of its schools to be designed as a model school by an architect nominated by the Council. This school will be an urban school; and it is most important in our view that the schools of rural England should have an equal advantage.

The offer is made on the understandings :—

1. That (as in the case of the London County Council) the expenditure on the Village College at Histon will not be in excess of the normal, and strictly in accordance with the amount determined by the Education Authority.

2. That the sum of not more than £1,200 will cover all the fees of the architects in connection with the preparation of plans and the erection and completion of the building, out of pocket expenses for travelling to Cambridge being defrayed by the Authority.

3. That in the event of the capital expenditure exceeding £20,000, the Authority will pay the fees of the architects amounting to 6 per cent. of the excess.

4. That the plans will be drawn up in consultation with the Authority and shall receive their full approval before being put into execution.

In conclusion we would emphasise that there is urgent need everywhere for the best and most original minds to be applied to the provision of educational buildings. Messrs. Maxwell Fry and Gropius would provide a powerful combination: Mr. Fry brings to the partnership feeling for the English tradition and a highly developed practical sense, while Professor Gropius possesses one of the most original architectural minds of our time, deeply interested in the social aspect of building, and most accomplished in using all the results of modern research. Their collaboration may be expected to produce a building not only very well suited to the needs of the Village College and the purposes it is to serve, but one which will preserve a fine architectural tradition. We do not anticipate that the work, if undertaken by Messrs. Maxwell Fry and Gropius would cost any more than if undertaken by any other architects; in fact, with the keenness of both for using wherever possible standard forms, it might work out even more cheaply. The result of their work would be a building which would have pioneer importance for Cambridgeshire and for the Country as a whole.

32 Lawn Road Flats, N.W.3. (Signed)
W. G. CONSTABLE,
Slade Professor of Fine Art in the University of Cambridge.
CHARLES HOLDEN,
F.R.I.B.A., Vice-President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Architect of the University of London Buildings.
J. M. KEYNES,
C. H. REILLY,
formerly Professor of Architecture in the University of Liverpool, past President of the Royal Institute of British Architects.
J. CRAVEN PRITCHARD,
Secretary

DR. EDER

SIR,—On March 30th, died, at the age of seventy, one of the most interesting men associated with the English Socialist movement in its pre-Labour-Party days. David Eder had far too much respect for individual freedom, and far too much contempt for half-baked social science, to fit in comfortably with political groups aiming at regimented uplift. Also, he was far too indifferent to public opinion and personal popularity to adopt any of those methods of publicity that seem essential to the gaining of "newspaper fame." He was of Russian Jewish descent, but I always gave him as my example of that rare bird in England—the characteristic ideal Englishman. His attitude to the common "illiterate" man and woman was fundamentally more understanding and "Christian" than that of almost any Gentile I have known. I first met him when I was a comparatively young man. I had come across a pamphlet on *The Endowment of Motherhood*, by M. D. Eder, as well as many articles with the same authorship in Orage's *New Age*, and was anxious to meet the writer. From then until his death, he remained one of my dearest and most respected friends.

He was one of the outstanding figures of the Zionist movement; and from 1918 to 1923 he acted as political head of the Zionist executive in Jerusalem. Later he was President of the English Zionist Federation.

As a doctor, he had wide experience; having practised, among other places, in Columbia, Bolivia and London's Lower Bohemia. He was one of the earliest pioneers of psycho-analysis in this country, and delivered the first lecture on Freudian psychology before the disbelieving British Medical Association. He translated the first of Freud's books to be published in England, and was the first Secretary of the British Psycho-analytical Society. During his later years his time was almost wholly taken up by his large practice as a psycho-analyst.

His experience, understanding and sympathy were such as to account for his professional success—even if there had been no Freud. He was one of the most companionable, generous and tolerant men, and one of the most individual "characters" I have ever met. I regard him as one of Socialism's noblest and most kindly humorous saints. HARRY ROBERTS

HACKNEY MARSHES

SIR,—You rightly point out in an editorial note that Mr. Herbert Morrison's political opponents are trying to make capital out of the Hackney Marshes dispute, and that he was able neatly to turn the tables on them in the L.C.C. debate.

But it must also be remembered that the opposition is not merely political, and that it includes organisations such as the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society and the Metropolitan Gardens Association. There must be a good many people in the same position as myself: we should usually support Mr. Morrison, but believe that on this particular occasion he is making a mistake; we are glad that the attempt to build on the Marshes was recently held to be illegal by the Courts, and we hope that the proposed Bill to legalise it will be rejected by Parliament. E. M. FORSTER

[We cordially agree and have already said that much of the opposition to the Hackney Marshes scheme was disinterested. But we know of no other way of getting on with the urgent problem of slum clearance and we believe the net result of this scheme will be to increase the amenities and to enlarge the open spaces available for the East End.—ED., *N.S. & N.*

AMERICA AND JAPAN

SIR,—My attention has only just been called to Mr. Ashley Montagu's letter which appeared in your number of April 4th, on the subject of the United States and the Manchurian crisis.

The fact is that Americans have been intensely anti-Japanese ever since the Japanese defeated the Russians in 1905 and claimed to be treated on an equality with the White races. It is, therefore, natural that, as Mr. Montagu writes, feeling ran very high in New York against Japan in January, 1932. This has no bearing on the statement in my previous letter that nothing would have induced Mr. Hoover to take action of any kind against Japan at that time. But I should, perhaps, have explained that by "action" I did not mean either the presentation of Notes to the Japanese Government or the reading of homilies on good behaviour to the Japanese people. I meant positive action such as the imposition of Sanctions and readiness to go to war, without which readiness Sanctions are mere bluff and worse than useless.

I shall not be at liberty to refer to the attitude of the Executive Power in the United States had I learned it during the course of my official duties. I have ascertained it since I left the Diplomatic Service from Americans who know exactly what they are talking about. And I cannot say how entirely I approve Mr. Hoover's wisdom.

It is really time that the legend of our having turned down an offer of American co-operation against Japan died. It has done an immense deal of harm to Anglo-American relations.

The Weir House, F. O. LINDLEY
Hampshire.

THE AIM OF PRAYER

SIR,—In his review of Miss Emmet's *Philosophy and Faith*, Mr. Joad writes that the object of the person praying is to alter the mind of God.

Prayer is beset by serious intellectual difficulties, but this is not one of them. It includes much more than requests for benefits. Its aim is to bring the human will into line with the will of God. No instructed Christian ever prays "Thy will be changed," but always "Thy will be done." This may possibly be futile, but it is not impertinent. CYRIL H. NORTON

14 Osborne Road,
Clifton, Bristol, 8.

SWISHING SKIRTS

SIR,—In the course of his comments upon my life of Molly Lepell your reviewer, "P. Q.," rebukes me—nay, shudders at my sin—because I have written of "swishing" skirts. I am inclined to agree that the verb to "swish" is a little below the dignity of the Muse of History, and I should accept the rebuke with humility had I employed it. But I have done nothing of the kind.

The offending passage is apparently that on p. 56, where I write of "a *whisper* of stiff silken skirts, and the light click of high-heeled brocaded shoes," on the staircase at 31, Old Burlington Street.

Is this really *de quoi frémir?* Heaven have mercy on us poor biographers if we must eliminate colour, sound, and *décor* from our scheme! DOROTHY MARGARET STUART

21 Emperor's Gate, S.W.7.

OPTICAL BENEFIT

SIR,—The letter headed "Optical Benefit" in your issue of April 18th is such a mixture of mis-statement and innuendo that if it had appeared in any other journal than THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION it would have been ignored. But since there are many readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION who are keen social workers, it will be of interest to them to know the origin of the National Ophthalmic Treatment Board, which is responsible for the administration of the National Eye Service now working successfully throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

This is an ophthalmic service designed to meet the needs of insured persons, their dependants and all others of similar economic status, namely, those whose family incomes do not exceed £250 per annum. It was established in conformity with the undertaking which the British Medical Association's witnesses gave to a Departmental Committee set up in 1927 to consider the merits of a Bill which was designed to give statutory recognition to sight-testing opticians. The Association was challenged to provide, within a reasonable time, an ophthalmic medical service which would conform to the economic needs of the poorer classes.

The challenge has been met, with a success that is growing steadily. If any of your readers would like to know more about the National Eye Service full particulars will be given by the Secretary (1 High Street, Marylebone, W.1) or myself.

British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1. G. C. ANDERSON, Medical Secretary

Miscellany

SATIRE

LET the tall cities of the plain and the huts on the hills
be defeated by time—
And as the sparkle on rime
Descend once more to the slime—

The old women go out for a little walk and curtsy and rant and rage
About the Sunday page—
And lament the golden age.

And the smart financiers go round and bluster in their haughty towers
While the rain showers.

And the young and pretty women hustle off to offices and schools
And cut up like fools.

And the bright young men who talk and stalk and hawk in their wake
Know how to give a splendid handshake.

And the poets lounge around in their garrets feeling a little fusty
Because their rhymes are rusty.

And the old men sit about the house for the rest of their lives
And scrap with their wives.

ROSS EDWARDS PIERCE

INTERREGNUM AT BURLINGTON HOUSE

WHEN Father Giuseppe Castiglione came to China at the beginning of the eighteenth century he brought with him some specimens of contemporary European painting. "Do you then wash only one side of your faces?" asked the Chinese when they saw the portraits in the Jesuit's collection, and their astonishment is indirectly explained in a volume which I recently acquired, wood-engravings and all, for a penny. "China; Its State and Prospects, with Special Reference to the Spread of the Gospel," was written close upon a century ago by the Rev. W. H. Medhurst, of the London Missionary Society, who observes hopefully: "If instructed in the art of shading, and taught the nature of perspective, the Chinese might become good artists; and one of them, who had the advantage of a few lessons from an eminent English painter, has produced some pieces which have been thought worthy of a place in the Royal Exhibition in Somerset House."

We have changed all that. The Chinese, by virtue of no Western instruction, have not only brought the dealers a great deal of money during the last thirty years but have also found their way into Burlington House, whose walls are now being covered with landscapes in precise perspective and half-washed English faces. The pause between the International Exhibition of Chinese Art and the 168th Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy provides for the critic a season of reflection upon our state and prospects, with special reference to the spread of cultural gospels.

Neither Father Castiglione nor the Rev. Mr. Medhurst would have been altogether pleased with the Chinese Exhibition. For though a number of paintings by the assiduous Jesuit himself (under his adopted Chinese name of Lang Shih-Ning) were hung there, it was accepted as a mark of poor taste to admire them, and the instructed passed them by with a curt deprecation of the intrusion of an illusory third dimension into a display which had so signally glorified the first two. Nor could Mr. Medhurst have failed to observe an attitude of pagan devotion adopted by many visitors before Lohans and Boddhisattvas (the phrase "ugly idol" being now almost obsolete), and to apprehend a general feeling of shocked amazement that Western soldiers, merchants and missionaries should have sought to bring civilisation to a people with such a tradition as was here set forth. Indeed both priests, the Jesuit and the Protestant, would have required the tonic of a Royal Academy Summer Exhibition to restore their faith in painting as a vehicle of perspective and an occupation of the well-armed Christian.

It is perhaps no more than a coincidence that sales from the Royal Academy during the last decade—the period of the great international exhibitions—have been well below the figure for 1920. It would certainly be rash to suggest that successive displays of the distant in place or time have convinced the public that their own country is at present barren

of good art. Pictures are still sold from the Academy—some £13,000 was raised last year—and the various reasons why more are not sold are hardly to be examined here. The Chinese influence of Burlington House and the North Court of the Victoria and Albert Museum is not likely to produce another Gainsborough, nor yet another Chippendale, and the most that can be prophesied is some improvement in lighting and arrangement. It is interesting to know, for instance, that the colossal sixth-century Buddha which stood in the Central Hall at the Chinese Exhibition was considered so successful as a focus of the whole scheme that the site is to be occupied in the Royal Academy Exhibition by a huge statue of Lord Willingdon—symbol of Western hegemony in the East. The abandonment of the usual banquet, however, with its loyal toasts of the armed forces and ministers of the Crown, cannot be attributed to an appreciation of the peaceful arts of a people who invented gunpowder and used it for fireworks. It is a feature, and a welcome one, of the Court mourning.

FRANCIS WATSON

ACCIDENTS AT NIGHT

FREQUENT reference has been made in this paper to the main difficulty which obstructs the Minister of Transport in his efforts to safeguard human life on the roads, a difficulty which throws into high relief his substantial success in balancing a heavy increase of traffic with a marked diminution in casualties. In other quests men are normally able to collect the essential data, and to analyse them to a point at which the problem becomes subdivided into a series of separate enterprises. But the problem of road safety has so far defied scientific analysis. When a mechanic is adjusting a faulty engine, he aims at isolating the fault which he desires to cure. But it is almost impossible to isolate the various factors which in sum compose the road problem; and very little dissection has so far been attempted. I should like to see one small and straightforward analysis attempted—namely, to separate those accidents which take place after lighting-up time from those which occur when lamps are lit. The analysis might go further, and separate into a third category such accidents as occur during the least pleasant period of the day for drivers, commonly known as the " between lights " period, when daylight is gradually shading through gloaming and dusk into darkness, when cycles do not burn their lamps, and motor vehicles hesitate between sidelamps and no lamps at all. Actually, such an analysis is less simple than it sounds, because it would be valueless unless it were balanced by some moderately accurate figures about the volume of traffic during the different periods; and this traffic shrinks fairly slowly at dusk, till it shrivels to very small dimensions at midnight, whilst it varies during the earlier hours of darkness according to routes and locality. The evening traffic in the West End is heavy; but evening traffic in Cornwall or Westmorland is negligible. Nevertheless, in spite of the obvious difficulties, it would be possible for a painstaking examiner to arrive at a tolerably accurate conclusion after contrasting the incidence of accidents, say, between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. as his first period, and between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. in winter. He would discover that the ratio of accidents to traffic in each period was so-and-so. The figures might conceivably prove startling. They might indicate—nobody knows in the least—that night driving is far more dangerous than daylight driving. Every experienced motorist admits that after dark a blind corner is safer than by day, for the simple reason that the beam of headlamps constitutes a far more effective warning of approach at a blind corner than any siren or hooter. This exception apart, every experienced motorist infinitely prefers daylight driving for a variety of logical reasons. At night his clear and definite vision is limited to a broad yellow beam pointing straight ahead, assuming that oncoming lamps do not compel him to dim or dip. By day he enjoys perfect vision ahead and to both flanks without interference or reasonable limit of range. By day he enjoys the help of true colour contrasts; at night colour contrasts are swamped by the inaccuracy of the artificial light which he is compelled to employ. The presence of other traffic on the road hampers him terribly. He is subject to either intermittent or continuous dazzle, for though we normally reserve the term " dazzle " for the paralysing glare of two powerful headlamps, motorists are actually semi-dazzled by a host of other lamps, including acetylene lamps on bicycles, the sidelamps of motors, street lamps, shop lighting, cinema arcs, reflected light thrown off wet tar and all smooth or polished surfaces, and the like. His eyes are working at very reduced efficiency quite apart from the direct effects of dazzle; for they are set to peer into darkness, and to readjust themselves with lightning rapidity to extreme alternations between bright light, dim light, and sheer darkness. As a result, the motorist's night vision is always far from perfect, and is exercised under the most harassing conditions. The analysis which I have suggested might prove that motorists adopt a self-denying ordinance, and by means of reduced speed and extreme caution rise superior to these night handicaps. It may equally prove that the incidence of accidents in proportion to volume of traffic rises steeply when dark falls and lamps are switched on. In the latter event, the Minister would naturally be inspired to tackle the problems of night traffic with special energy. Experiment might prove the value of a host of minor innovations . . . the value of whitened kerbs for all streets and roads, the value of universal rear lamps, new designs of road lighting, new restrictions on street lighting in built-up areas with special reference to shops, cinemas, advertising signs, and the like. An American inventor claims, and publishes his claims through an interesting film now showing at the provincial cinemas, to have solved the dazzle problem by means of a special lens which professes to " polarise " light, so that a lamp can throw wide and long-ranged illumination without creating the least tendency to dazzle. If this be true, he has revolutionised night driving, and shorn it of most of its terrors; but the claim sounds too good to be true, and American inventors are seldom either modest or pessimistic. Be that as it may, we still think and scheme in a very considerable fog about the really vital factors in the road casualty list, and here is an obvious field for research and experiment. To cite one point which requires no experiment or research of any kind, it is common knowledge that only a small minority of skilled drivers are able to drive even in daylight without wasting valuable road space on their near side. Study any line of cars parked " against " a kerb, and you will see many which leave a gap of as much as 3ft. between their near-side wheels and the kerb. Where bilateral parking is permitted, as in many by-streets, this entails a waste of 6ft. of road space, a strip capable of accommodating an extra traffic line. If this waste exists in full daylight, both with parked cars and with cars in motion, the wastage at night is obviously far greater, because it is much less easy for the driver to determine how far out he may be from the kerb or hedge. This single fact shrieks for police action. The police can easily educate drivers to park close in to the edge of the road. Drivers would then learn to pay special attention to the clearance between car and road edge, whether the car be stationary or in motion; and this single reform would be tantamount to increasing the width of all our roads without spending a copper. The process could next be accelerated and intensified by keeping all kerbs whitewashed, and by inserting a white concrete sill along the edge of all new roads, so that the moving motorist at night would find it easier to practise his new ideal of wasting a minimum of the cross-width of any road which he chances to be using. In the next place scientific research might concentrate on the production of orthochromatic lenses for motor-car headlamps, so that it would become easier to distinguish between tarmac and turf at the edge of a road, and to avoid mistaking a cottage wall for a road. A host of reforms and experiments are possible in connection with night driving, and we are allowing ourselves to be distracted from many opportunities by a pardonable but foolishly exclusive attention to the dazzle problem.

R. E. DAVIDSON

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Eumorfopoulos Collection

At first sight the substitution of an exhibition worth only a hundred thousand pounds for one valued at ten million may seem a bad exchange. But Chinese art, like most other things, depends for its effect on a certain intimacy in its presentation. The new quarters of the Eumorfopoulos collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, though not in every way ideal, are far nearer so than could have been anticipated. The display of this collection under one roof does more than supply the public with a comprehensive survey of Chinese art. It provides a test of the permanence of the effect on public taste of the most successful of all the international exhibitions. What matters is not the motive which took people to Burlington House, but the impression they carried away. Superficial observation seemed to show that

casual visitors there looked at Chinese art as being something unfamiliar, with an attention they had never given to the products of their own culture. It would be an odd paradox if those arts in which the aesthetic factor is most readily perceptible should in fact find greatest popular favour. The exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum is enterprising, intelligible and thoroughly well arranged. Comparatively few of the objects have quite the compelling quality of some of those which have gone, but all in all the collection gives the ordinary person a unique opportunity of enriching and refining his perceptive faculties.

"Barabau," at Sadler's Wells

A new ballet, *Barabau*, was added to the Sadler's Wells repertory last week. It is a dramatic story with words and music by the Italian composer Rieti and was originally produced by Diaghilev with a choreography by Balanchine. Balanchine was never a great choreographer or one who could be compared favourably with Fokine or Massine and his choreography was not very successful. It cannot be said that the choreography of Ninette de Valois for *Barabau* is much better, since in spite of some gay satirical military exercises whose topicality was much appreciated by the audience there was too much stereotyped monotony of movement equivalent to what is known in music as passage playing. The music, however, is very lively and the choral singing effective. Also, the decor by Edward Burra is appropriate and pleasing. *Barabau* was received by the audience with much enthusiasm which I think was chiefly due to the liveliness of the music and the highly spirited performance of it by the orchestra under Mr. Constant Lambert. Constant Lambert has done wonders with the Vic-Wells orchestra; it is a pity that some of the opera conductors at Sadler's Wells cannot emulate him in precision and vitality.

"Glass Houses," at the Royalty

It is curious how the prejudice against the subversive element in daughters-in-law still survives, but it does, and the theme of Mr. Ellis's play is a genuine everyday affair. It moves a little slowly on well-worn lines and the close of the piece is a little unexciting, when the exasperated wife turns the tables by finding out that the hard and devoted middle-aged aunt has in her youth taken a leaf out of Lady Chatterley's book. The dialogue is well handled and the scenes, except for the meeting between the said aunt and her newly resurrected son, are well constructed. Perhaps we could put up with such plays better if they were more polished; some of the jokes here hardly pay for their position, but for a quiet and pleasant evening the piece is well enough. It is admirably acted by Miss Henrietta Watson, as the Aunt, Mr. Waddington as the Doctor and in particular by Mr. Lewis Shaw, as the newly discovered son, a very difficult and shy-making part, which he handled with tact and sensibility. Miss Aileen Marson as the common wife overacted somewhat and her performance would have been more convincing in the emotional scene with less noise.

"Waiting for Lefty," at the Unity Theatre Club

We, the audience, are a meeting of New York taxi-drivers. Shall we strike? Lefty will tell us. We are waiting for Lefty. Speakers exhort us from the platform. The Union boss reasons for the bosses. A Company spy takes the floor; he is exposed. Between speeches we are shown the scenes which have led up to this crisis. But Lefty doesn't come; he has been shot dead in the alley. We rush the stage; we mass together with a roar of "Strike, strike, strike!" The curtain falls.

This play, the product of the Group Theatre of New York, displays some bold and effective innovations in dramatic treatment. At the back of the stage sits the committee throughout the action, always visible, though in shadow while the flash-backs are played in front. The workers are to some degree individualised, but the boss is the same man, whether playing the Trade Union Judas, the callous industrialist or the self-indulgent theatre manager. Though not a masterpiece this piece is impressive in its starkness, brevity and directness of attack. Given by a highly trained company on an adequately equipped stage its effect should be shattering. It is essentially of the theatre and ranks with *We, The People*, though it does not quite reach the persuasiveness of Mr. Elmer Rice's play. This performance is effective and the players of the Unity Theatre Club command our respect for portraying characters with whom they are in sympathy.

Films at the Forum and Queen's Hall

If supported as it deserves to be, the London Film Institute Society hopes in future to revive old films of outstanding interest and merit. At the Forum Cinema on April 19th, it showed, along with the celebrated "peace film" (*People of Britain*) and a disappointing documentary by Marion Grierson, an early Chaplin gem, *The Cure*, and that first talking picture that really was a "talkie" in both the strict and the widest sense of the word—*The Front Page*, an adaptation of a stage play by Messrs. Hecht and MacArthur, directed in 1931 by Lewis Milestone. Five years in the life of the cinema are equivalent to twenty in that of a non-mechanical art; but this film was so good when it was made that, seeing it now, one might almost suppose it was released only yesterday. Sound-recording has radically changed since this blistering hotchpotch of wisecracks, coincidences, corruption and satire was photographed, but the technical dexterity of the film is so amazing that the ear forgets that fact. And now a novelty has been produced here in England which we cannot call either a step forward or a step back, but a skip to the side: the first English surrealist picture. Concordia Films and Messrs. Chappell privately presented a "composed" film, *The Robber Symphony*, at the Queen's Hall last week. It took £80,000 to make and over two hours to show. Mr. Friedrich Feher spent several years writing some rollicking music, setting it to motion-pictures, concocting a scenario, and directing this fairy-tale himself. Probably "quaint" is the only word to describe the result of his uncurtailed labours. Witty, amateurish, original, and ineffably boring it is, too, in parts. But as a whole—and it is far too long—just quaint: an unbelievable blend of *Sans Famille, Emil and the Detectives, Le Million, Zéro de Conduite* and family charades. The continuity is naturally all in the music, not in the film, which was made back to front. And yet scissors are cheap. If only Mr. Feher could have afforded them, and had snicked carefully *round* his many delicious ideas, and his son's pleasant acting, what a splendid film this would be!

"King of Burlesque," at the Regal

This is a routine musical, undistinguished yet entertaining. Warner Baxter is the vulgar, successful showman who marries for "class" and has his heart of gold broken by an aristocratic wife picked from among the upper ten million. He finds, of course, that true love—the square shooting, blonde little trouper—was there all the time at his elbow. Once more, where the sourly sentimental ethic of the wisecrack obtains, the moral, the social implications of a very American film have to be disregarded. A flow of brisk sarcasm from that most amiable of yes-and-no men, Jack Oakie, and the shrewdness of the direction will give great pleasure to the initiated. Moreover, it does the heart good to see everyone act so regular when given a bundle of bonds, a large diamond, or unlimited backing.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, April 24th—
"Troilus and Cressida," Stratford-on-Avon.

SATURDAY, April 25th—
Association Football. Cup Final, Wembley.
Pianoforte Recital. Harold Craxton, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.

SUNDAY, April 26th—
S. K. Ratcliffe on "Democracy, Discipline and Force," Conway Hall, 11.
Film Society. New Gallery, 2.30.
Emile Burns on "Perspectives of British Capitalism in 1936," Marx House, Clerkenwell Green, 7.30.
Concert in aid of the Medem Sanatorium, Poland. Artists include Mark Hamburg, Marie Burke, and Vladimir Rosing, Shoreditch Town Hall, 7.30.

MONDAY, April 27th—
"Hohe Schule," Everyman Cinema, Hampstead.
International Opera Season. Covent Garden. Till June 12th.

TUESDAY, April 28th—
Rev. Leslie Keeble on "The Methodist Church and Peace," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
Lotte Lehmann, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

WEDNESDAY, April 29th—
Dance in aid of the Goswell Women's Welfare Centre, Bush House Restaurant, Aldwych, 9. (Tickets 5s. at the door).

THURSDAY, April 30th—
R. Gessner on "The Economic Issues of the Present International Crisis." Morley College, 7.30.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

MANKIND shows signs of outgrowing his Gods; the hawk-headed, dog-faced ones have gone, probably for ever, the whirling armed Goddesses, Ganesh elephant and Monkey God of India make few converts, and I doubt whether even Germanic obedience will kindle the cold Spring Goddess Easter, or Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday into active volcanic divinities again. Yet we might just as well be worshipping monkeys and alligators as be what we are; for we are all hero-worshippers. The worship, that is, goes on just the same, the worship of force and cruelty and fear, and of unreason, but we put Hitler in the place of God or Satan, and believe he must be a very great man because he has imposed his stupid personality on the most emotional people in Europe at a time when they were desperately in need of a period of collective self-worship. In a century or two Hitler will be a hero, even to German Jews. For we all want to worship the best heroes; that is the most popular successes, and when living ones prove too much for our stomachs, we sandpaper them down to suit ourselves when they are safely dead. Thus, because masses of men died at his command, Napoleon, with his temperament as of a cold pork pie, is a genius to us all. Remembering all the Ethiopian villages blistered and blinded with mustard-gas, posterity will not question Mussolini's. That is the heroic touch. But surely an English hero is very different from a Hun or a Wop? For example, every Englishman feels a thrill of pride at the name of Nelson. He, to be sure, was a real hero. He was a genius; emotional, highly strung, romantic, wonderful. Trafalgar was a superb victory; one of the most brilliant gambles that has ever succeeded, while the dying hero asking for a kiss symbolises everything that makes one most proud of belonging to the unphlegmatic English race. Surely we can leave Nelson on his monument and safely worship him?

* * *

Yet there are some extremely unpleasant facts about Nelson and Lady Hamilton that insist on popping up, just as the putrefying corpse of old Admiral Caracciolo literally popped up out of the sea, to everyone's horror, and insisted on floating upright and accusing, in spite of a 250-lb. weight attached to its feet. The whole part played by Nelson and the Hamiltons in the restoration of the Bourbon King and Queen of Naples is remarkably unedifying. He himself had no doubts apparently about the matter:

> In June and July, 1779, I went to Naples, and, as His Sicilian Majesty is pleased to say, reconquered his kingdom, and placed him on the throne. On the 9th of August I brought His Sicilian Majesty back to Palermo, having been for upwards of four weeks on board the Foudroyant. On the 13th, His Sicilian Majesty presented me with a sword magnificently enriched with diamonds, the title of Duke of Bronté, and annexed to it the feud of Bronté supposed to be worth £3,000 per annum. . . . I may say to the reader: go thou and do likewise.—NELSON.

Actually he had broken an armistice and had insisted upon the execution of persons who had surrendered upon terms. The Rev. J. S. Clarke (Chaplain to William IV) and Mr. M'Arthur, in a whacking official life explain that:

> It is assuredly a subject of great delicacy and difficulty. It may, however, be observed that Nelson had some old-fashioned ideas, which it would be well for society if they more generally prevailed. He had an utter horror for Republicans and more particularly for those whom the hotbed of French corruption had raised. He considered Rebellion against the lawful Sovereign of any country, with the sacred Legislator, as the Sin of Witchcraft.

They have to record, however, that it was not only the perverted Helen Maria Williams who stood up for the martyrs, but that Captain Foote pointed out that capitulations had actually been signed and that it was an evident breach of faith. Those who wish at all costs to keep their Nelson untarnished had better not read Mr. Vincent Sheean's *Sanfelice* (Hamish Hamilton, 8*s.* 6*d.*), an enthralling historical novel dealing with the establishment of the "Parthenopean Republic" at Naples and the restoration of the Bourbons. Mr. Sheean's verdict is that

> during those days, he seemed more than a little mad. . . . He had actually done nothing whatever towards the restoration of the kingdom, but Ferdinand and Maria Carolina showered honours on him . . . to judge by his glory he might have been the actual victor of a battle, instead of the man who entered when the battle was already won. His whole victory consisted in the delivery of some hundreds of unarmed men, women and children, who had surrendered to him in good faith, to the jailer and the executioner; but this was precisely the victory which Ferdinand and Carolina most valued; their gratitude to him knew no limits. . . . Caracciolo, the old Admiral, who had been neither Royalist nor Republican, but a sailor, was hanged from the yard-arm of Nelson's flagship and dangled there the whole day long until sunset, while the Admiral and Lady Hamilton entertained their guests to dinner.

It most certainly is a subject of great delicacy and difficulty, which requires a good deal of sandpapering away. Unless we save ourselves trouble by not having any national heroes. Who knows, they may be as unnecessary as Gods. If we try we may get along without them. After all, there are none alive in England now.

* * *

In *Sanfelice* Mr. Sheean has taken a theme which, apart from political implications, would have appealed to Conrad who was particularly attracted by the ironic and romantic situation of simple and innocent characters, unconscious instruments doomed to play fatal roles. Such is Mr. Sheean's heroine, La Sanfelice herself, a lovely aristocrat who has been starved for love, and whose physical infatuation with a cowardly and insignificant man of the people leads her to play a terrible outstanding part in the revolution and dooms her after the restoration. But though the ironic subject has something of Conrad, the treatment has more of the tremendous vitality of Dumas. Mr. Sheean may not be pleased at the comparison: his preface with its reference to helpful talks with Benedetto Croce, and to the bibliography of the subject, shows that he has taken immense pains to be historically accurate and fair, labours which the slapdash mulatto could never have conceived. Yet the likeness to Dumas is there in the simplification of history into antitheses which can instantly be grasped by the reader and this instinctive feeling for making a dramatic point produces a likeness in style.

> But the Italian philosophers, poets, writers, revolutionary intellectuals, that band of *illuminés* and idealists who had formed the republics at Milan and at Rome, and hoped to do the same thing in Naples, were astounded. What? they asked. Can this be? These wretched Neapolitan *lazzaroni* who have never received anything from the Bourbons but starvation and beatings, must have gone mad. They are fighting their friends in defence of their enemies.

To my ears that passage has the authentic ring of Dumas *père*.

* * *

I prefer Dumas to Scott as a historical novelist because he has speed, and the epigrammatic simplification I have noted which gives his writing the illusion of wittiness. His weakness is in his absence of anything like poetry, of colour, of a sense of natural beauty. And rather surprisingly these are Mr. Sheean's limitations also. He is very good at describing crowds; one is aware of the restless dangerous Neapolitan crowd all through the book, a crowd which was so well symbolised by that "sacred Legislator" whose half-witted brutality, physical dirtiness and coarse language were heroic exaggerations of its own qualities. *Sanfelice* is an exciting pageant which one may read breathlessly, and the glamorous excitement of Lady Hamilton bawling Hurrah infects the reader. But one does not quite believe in the miserable lawyer, Fernando, or in Sanfelice's passion for him, and the Republicans, in general, are not real enough to Mr. Sheean for us completely to believe in them. The merit of the novel is its dramatic sweep and historical interest; its weakness is that few of the characters have solidity. DAVID GARNETT

JOHNSON AND MRS. THRALE

Mrs. Thrale of Streatham. By C. E. VULLIAMY. *Cape.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Every life numbers a few volcanic shocks—terrible inundations of disappointment; fiery outpourings of jealous rage and despair; sudden upheavals before which the whole fabric of self-esteem threatens to give way; and these shocks are often out of all proportion to the events by which they may appear to have been precipitated. Of the happenings in Dr. Johnson's early life, that conspired with ill-health to give such a dark colouring of self-reproachful melancholy to his later period, we know very little. Among the shocks that most affected his old age was the discovery that Mrs. Thrale, in whose household he had spent so many years on terms of tender familiarity and placid day-to-day friendship—Mrs. Thrale, the "honoured mistress" whom he had loved, esteemed, reverenced, served and "long thought . . . the first of human kind"—contemplated an "ignominious" marriage with an Italian music master. His letter on the occasion is well known. Certainly a splendid piece of invective, it is unquestionably not the sort of letter by which an amorous woman (who had already passed through an inferno of misery and indecision that nearly deprived her of her senses) was likely to be turned aside from a desperate scheme. Nor was the moment justly calculated. At the time when Mrs. Thrale dared the censure of the world (which retaliated by social ostracism), "abandoned her children and her religion," to marry the gratified but timid and, at least during the opening stages of their relationship, considerably bewildered Signor Piozzi, Johnson had forfeited his Mistress' favour. As "the astonishing history of the enigmatical attachment which impelled Mrs. Thrale to her second marriage" unfolds its tormented and devious length, we see the Mistress mildly and unnoticeably—then nervously, harshly, almost hysterically—endeavouring to shake off the Doctor's moral dominion. It is not difficult to understand the point of view. Though the series of anecdotes and recollections that she compiled after her disgrace are, of course, untrustworthy, though she may not have told the truth when she declared that she had originally submitted to the Johnsonian yoke only in deference to her first husband's wishes, there is no doubt that, as soon as Signor Piozzi had begun to shoot forth his rejuvenating meridional beams, the old life at Streatham or Brighton—with Johnson visiting instant annihilation upon some presumptuous or too-talkative acquaintance; Johnson criticising the food or the ribbons in her cap; Johnson devouring an enormous plate-full of ripe peaches; Johnson insisting that she should sit up till all hours that he might indulge "his unmanly thirst for tea"; Johnson, whatever one did, or wherever one looked—became intolerable, the irksome memory of a past existence.

For Johnson, as Mr. Vulliamy is at great pains to persuade us in his interesting but exceedingly cantankerous biographical study, *Mrs. Thrale of Streatham*, was enamoured of Mrs. Thrale—more than he himself suspected or would have confessed to his most confidential friend; but Mrs. Thrale was not in love with Dr. Johnson. Up to a point, their interests had coincided. Mrs. Thrale was an unusually vivacious woman, married to a remarkably ponderous, indeed, constitutionally lethargic, man. With Dr. Johnson in tow, she became a personage. It was she who had had the credit of domesticating that magnificent, if uncouth and, at times, decidedly repulsive, figure; she who had helped to raise him from the depths of melancholy, where he wallowed among the lost souls, to her Streatham drawing-room, where he was well fed, well looked after, well flattered and could meet such company as he chose, on his own terms. It was she who had taken him to Paris and Brighton and Bath. . . . Unfortunately, a woman—even a woman as frivolous and shallow, in many respects, as Hester Lynch Thrale—may develop, quite unexpectedly and disconcertingly, far more fundamental needs. The feminine forties are always dangerous; and it was during the fourth decade of this busy life that Aphrodite swept down, attaching herself entire to Mrs. Thrale's protesting and, hitherto, utterly irreproachable person, charging her helpless heart with erotic frenzy.

She struggled—as might a flamingo caught in a man-trap. She called for assistance, invoking, among others, Miss Burney, who wept a great deal—"cried herself blind over it"—but could give no proper help. She thought of her duty—but it was obvious that her daughters had never loved her; and Queeney, Dr. Johnson's favourite, looked on with contempt and some disgust at the spectacle of her noisy middle-aged mother vociferating in the grip of an emotion that she herself, a young, unawakened girl, neither appreciated nor understood. At last, she decided that she must submit. Personally, I have always had a sneaking admiration for Mrs. Thrale and have felt that, however badly she treated the poor Grand Cham, when he wrote detailing his infirmities and suing for some return of the old warmth that had made the years passed at Streatham the happiest period of a long and unhappy life, she cut a gallant and not entirely inestimable figure. There is no hint that she regretted her marriage with Piozzi; and, assuming that she realised that her second marriage was a mistake, the ability to abide by one's mistakes is always an endearing and lovable characteristic. The world agreed to despise her; but she would not be daunted. Queeney very seldom answered her letters; but it was only after long and persevering efforts, during which she poured forth a vulgar, but vivid and perpetually scintillating, narrative of her travels and triumphs as Piozzi's wife, that Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi descended to family recrimination. In her eightieth year, an indefatigable old lady, with very bright cheeks, very garish clothes and a very lively wig, she opened a ball herself—squired by her adopted son, Sir John Salusbury—and displayed an "elasticity," "dignity" and animation that reaped universal public applause. No, it is hard to condemn—though easy to laugh at—Mrs. Thrale; and Mr. Vulliamy's book might have been engaging if he had been less consistently censorious, if he had been prepared to give her the benefit of a single doubt. It is true he is uncommonly hard on the other characters—that Johnson, Thrale, Boswell, Queeney, Fanny Burney and Baretti all receive savage castigation, but Mrs. Thrale is the target of his fiercest abuse. Incidentally, since elsewhere he denounces Mrs. Thrale as a peculiarly untrustworthy witness, why has an account of Burke's household, printed in the *Anecdotes* and full of obvious exaggerations, been reproduced on p. 132 without comment—merely with the remark that it is "very unexpected"?

PETER QUENNELL

NEW NOVELS

Flowering Judas. By KATHERINE ANNE PORTER. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Indian Tea. By AILEEN SMILES. *Constable.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The Bad Companions. By MAURICE L. RICHARDSON. *Miles.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Keep the Aspidistra Flying. By GEORGE ORWELL. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Some years ago there appeared a story in *transition* called *The Jilting of Granny Weatherall*. Afterwards I remember reading an article, during the expatriate controversy, which gave a list of the American writers living abroad who had achieved work of permanent importance. There was Ezra Pound, of course, the grand old man of anthologies, Hemingway, Kay Boyle, the inevitable William Carlos Williams, who, like Herbert Read over here, has to appear in the first number of any American magazine before it can claim to be advanced, and, among others, Katherine Anne Porter. It seemed a long way to have got on one story, and trying to find out more about her work I was told that she had produced a limited edition of her tales and that "I might get a copy for fifty dollars." This English collection of her stories includes all that appeared in the luxury edition of *Flowering Judas* and four new ones. They seem to me about as good as any short stories that have been written lately. I do not think they are equal to the best stories of Lawrence, Huxley, Hemingway, or Maugham, or a story like *The Disinherited* by Elisabeth Bowen, but, in the more sober tradition of the 'thirties, with their open puritanism, and their insistence on verbal and emotional under-emphasis and good taste, this book strikes a welcome note, impeccably obeying the strict canon of the time, yet revealing an authoress who, besides being imaginative and fastidious, is also witty and intellectually robust. Several of the stories are about Mexico and do much to rid it of the Bogeyman quality with which it was invested by Lawrence, and the longest is about the film company, with American capital and a great Russian director, which spent so much time there.

I quote part of a description of a Mexican revolutionary.

> Not for nothing has Braggioni taken pains to be a good revolutionist and a professional lover of humanity. He will never die of it. He has the malice, the cleverness, the wickedness, the sharpness of wit, the hardness of heart, stipulated for loving the world profitably. *He will never die of it.* He will live to see himself kicked out from his feeding trough by other hungry world-saviours. . . .
>
> Once he was called Delgadito by all the girls and married women who ran after him; he was so scrawny all his bones showed under his thin cotton clothing, and he could squeeze his emptiness to the very backbone with his two hands. . . . Now he is a leader of men,

crafty men who whisper in his ear, hungry men who wait for hours outside his office for a word with him, emaciated men with wild faces who waylay him at the street gate with a timid "Comrade, let me tell you . . ." and they blow the foul breath from their empty stomachs in his face.

Flowering Judas is a book that I can recommend with enthusiasm to all novel readers. It should even satisfy the solid taste, the traditional Anglo-Saxon distrust of brilliance, of the Sage of Huntingdon. As it was first tipped in this paper over a year ago, I should like to mention the other novel bracketed with it as needing an English publisher. It was Nathaniel West's *Miss Lovelihearts*, a violent and disturbing little satire of the slump period, highly unpleasant, and extremely readable.

Indian Tea is a difficult novel to assess. I still can't say whether it is really good or not, but, reading it in a car at Easter, I know it gave the greatest pleasure, between meals, to our little freight of human souls. Although it is a first novel it is the work of a born story-teller, not a highbrow, and not a stylist, but an observant and humorous young writer with a feeling for drama, and a depth of realism and common sense. It is the story of two people, an athletic, simple, boundery young tea-planter and a stern, rather priggish, but good-looking young governess, whose souls a Fakir interchanges by means of a snake rite, such as Teiresias underwent, and such as is quoted in *The Waste Land*. The governess becomes the young planter, with his fine body, his native mistress, his bad reputation. The planter finds himself a woman, with two small children to look after. The novel is the record of their experiences till they can be changed back again. It is an unusual plot, but so well handled as to seem not at all improbable after a few pages, and gives enormous scope to the writer's comic spirit, her passion for India, and her detached, alert interest in the habits of the English middle-class. As the book progresses one gets more and more devoted to the young planter, his manly attempts to drink as much as he used to, to keep in with his old friends, and the curious public school mixture of shrewdness, dishonesty, and charm which enables him soon to qualify, for a governess, as "very hot stuff." Some incidents, such as the servants' night-club, are too far-fetched, but the authoress brings on the whole the same glowing descriptive power to polo, tennis tournaments, tea-planting, dressmaking, yoga, frontier warfare, Indian women, house-parlourmaiding, fishing, and tiger shooting; and after reading this most entertaining book, with its admirable character drawing, one will know the exact status, ambitions, and hobbies of all the passengers on one's next P. and O. If only all first novels were so delightful!

The Bad Companions is a picaresque, satirical novel of the gay, topsy-turvy amoral type introduced, in 1928, by *Decline and Fall*. To my mind, such books stand or fall by their freshness, by the authentic quality of the author's good spirits. One touch of serious political or social criticism and the pie-crust collapses. This touch, in *The Bad Companions*, is agreeably absent. The material used by Mr. Richardson, however, is somewhat hackneyed. His two rogues are not original, one is the typical disciple, the lazarillo, the other a conventional blend of Philbrick and Captain Grimes; his themes, old school ties, retired colonels in Cheltenham, the clash of Blackshirts and Redshirts with the Mercutio-like hero squashed in the middle and crying "A plague on both your houses," are rather obvious and have been a little too much in the air. But the treatment is most agreeable, the author is unhampered by any middlebrow concessions to respectability or good taste, his jokes are new, his attitude to life adventurous, anarchical, and sexy. He has, in particular, an eye for the horrors of modern architecture and decoration, a refreshing breeze from the Left blows through his chapters, he uses psycho-analysis sparingly and ingeniously, is sceptical, sophisticated, and anti-puritan without any touch of Scottish heartiness. This is a book written more especially for the male sex, and for the more politically minded of it; at its worst the conventionality of the material, even down to the escaped lunatic, is irritating, at its best we catch an echo of the resonant but unpopular accents of Groucho Marx.

Keep the Aspidistra Flying also brings up the question of material. It is about London. *Burmese Days* was about Burma. Now the reader knows too much of London, and not enough about Burma. He cannot, in fact, be as interested in Hampstead. But the writer of *Burmese Days* was also himself fond of Burma and included many beautiful descriptions of it, while the writer of *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* hates London and everything there. Hence the realism of one book was redeemed by an operating sense of beauty, that of the other is not. It is, in fact, a completely harrowing and stark account of poverty, and poverty as a squalid and all-pervading influence. The hero works for two pounds a week in a bookshop. He has a girl whom he is too poor to marry, and is writing a poem on which he is too poor really to concentrate. It is winter. The book is the recital of his misfortunes interrupted by tirades against money and the spiritual evil it causes. It is written in clear and violent language, at times making the reader feel he is sitting in a dentist's chair with the drill whirring, at times seeming too emphatic and far-fetched. There have been so many novels in which young men and their fiancées sit over the gas fire and wonder where the next shilling is coming from, or go out and hate the streets. This is perhaps the most logical of all of them, but suffers, with an irony which the author would appreciate, from the fact that the obsession with money about which the book is written, is one which must prevent it from achieving the proportion of a work of art. CYRIL CONNOLLY

LETTERS FROM PRISON

Dimitroff's Letters from Prison. Edited by A. KURELLA. *Gollancz and Martin Lawrence.* 6s.

Letters from Prison. By ERNST TOLLER. Translated by R. Ellis Roberts. *Lane.* 12s. 6d.

In an age of ruthless dictatorships and police tyranny, when any intelligent person with inconvenient ideas about freedom or social justice stands more than a good chance of finding himself locked up sooner or later, it seems not impossible that a whole "prison-literature" will accumulate; in ten years' time perhaps every writer of any standing will have among his works a poem, an essay, a collection of letters written in prison or concentration camp. German prisons will stand high in the list of honour, having produced first Rosa Luxemburg's letters, and now these books by two of the most interesting figures in post-war Europe.

Dimitroff's Letters from Prison is a collection of all that the Third Reich's famous scapegoat wrote during his imprisonment in Berlin and Leipsic. There are letters to his mother, to his defending counsel, to writers and others abroad who were occupying them-

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t lves with his case, among them several letters that never passed he Censor, complaints to the prison authorities, notes for his speeches, and various statements, including the one which he drew up after refusal to sign the police-magistrate's own protocol during his first examination. The measure of the man, his force of thought and irony, his courage, is given at once in this statement. Demonstrating that the burning of the Reichstag could only have been the work of a lunatic or a fanatical anti-Communist, he concludes: "Happily I am neither demented, nor an enemy of Communism." No wonder General Göring was reduced to a pathetic stream of incoherent abuse and threats when faced with such an antagonist in court. One of the most remarkable facts that emerges from this book is the clearness of Dimitroff's analysis of the case at a time when he was weakened by his treatment in prison and practically cut off from the outside world; even the totally unreliable reports bearing on it in the Nazi newspapers he was for long periods not allowed to read. But the speeches themselves, the breath-taking replies and interruptions, are not here, and the book can only be regarded as a footnote, though an important and fascinating one, to the man who became world-famous during his trial, and who subsequently, as Secretary of the Comintern and author of *The Working-class against Fascism*, has attained an influence and a position precisely the opposite of that which his captors were so confidently preparing for him.

If Dimitroff's letters are valuable for the light they throw on an outstanding man of action, Toller's letters are interesting in themselves, as the works of a sensitive artist, and one with a capacity for brooding, imaginative thought. They are even more effective than the poems, which have been retranslated (including the famous *Swallow-Book*) and printed with them in this volume. This may be partly owing to the almost insuperable difficulty of translating poetry; but the letters have a passion and direct humanity that is muffled in many of the poems by artificiality and a mystical strain that seems to increase as the imprisonment dragged on. They have also the same quality of vivid horror that made the first volume of Toller's projected autobiographical series, *I Was a German*, so striking. It is difficult to imagine that the day-to-day sufferings, physical and mental, of a revolutionary prisoner helpless in the hands of counter-revolutionary officials, can be better conveyed than in these poignant, unsentimental letters. His accounts of some of the events that particularly affected him, such as the death of his fellow-prisoner, Hagemeister, of his mother's serious illness while he was refused permission to go to her, will work, for many people, as more conclusive denunciations of a monstrous system than any polemic. His position was fantastic, and probably unique: acclaimed all over the world for the dramas he was writing in his cell, dramas publicly performed in the country which was imprisoning him, he was sometimes not even allowed to read the critics' notices. But although one is all the time aware, in reading these letters, that Toller was a poet, one is continually reminded that he had also been a man of action, that his Socialist faith was strong and his understanding of political developments still keen. Some of his remarks about the Weimar Republic, the rottenness at its core, and the way it would end unless an almost miraculous change occurred in the mentality of its leaders, are remarkably prophetic. Indeed, after reading the book, one is only surprised that it went on existing for nearly nine years after Toller's release from Niederschönenfeld—or that people like Toller ever got free at all. JOHN LEHMANN

FAMILY HISTORY

The Five Sons of "Bare Betty." By COL. THE HON. ARTHUR MURRAY. *Murray*. 10s. 6d.

The pious duty of family historian, to which Lord Tweedsmuir (as we must learn to call John Buchan) refers in a commendatory preface, far from being neglected at the present time, is done to excess. People belonging to old families, rich in records, are only too anxious to compile books about them, to judge from the number that are published. Few of them are of much biographical or historical or literary interest. The importance of extracts from humdrum diaries, long rambling letters, inventories, accounts, dinner menus, of all the small beer of family archives, is overrated.

Colonel Murray has better material than most family historians. Four out of the five ancestors, whose characters and achievements are described in this book, were men of mark in the eighteenth century. More is known of them than what they ate and drank, and how they were clothed. They were all talented in their way, and had strong and original personalities. James Murray, one of Wolfe's brigadiers at the capture of Quebec, was the first British Governor of Canada, and distinguished himself in that office by pursuing a wise and conciliatory policy towards the French Canadians. His report in defence of it, occasioned by the ridiculous charges made against him by the English settlers, which were for a time believed by the Home Government, witnesses to the truth of his descendant's description of him as a "high-minded, just and far-seeing Scot." Alexander Murray, an enthusiastic Jacobite, made history by refusing to kneel at the bar of the House of Commons. "The proud spirit of the Hon. Alexander Murray," Erskine May writes in his *Constitutional History*, "revolted against this indignity. As a consequence, some years later the Commons formally renounced this opprobrious usage by standing order." The biographical sketch of George Murray, a naval officer, who succeeded his elder brother, Patrick, as sixth Lord Elibank, shows that the author has inherited the "proud spirit" and the adamantine obstinacy of Alexander. The accuracy of a statement made in a book on Anson's World Voyage by Admiral Boyd Somerville that George Murray had deserted Anson's squadron, was challenged by the family historian. A long correspondence followed, which the family historian has printed in its entirety. It enlivens the somewhat dull history of George.

Patrick, to whom Dr. Johnson wrote, "I never met you without going away a wiser man," was celebrated for his wit in his own time. The examples of it given by Colonel Murray suggest that it was of the ponderous kind. Patrick's letters to his natural son, William Young, printed in the Appendix by the advice of the late Augustine Birrell, who said they were "some of the most original and touching letters" he had ever read, enable us to understand the contemporary estimate of the man better. "It is true, I have not been a punctual correspondent, but that was because I really had nothing to say, and it has ever been my system that of all idle things, idle letters are the most childish." How good!

It ought perhaps to be added that "Bare Betty," who bore these Murrays, was the fourth Lady Elibank, and acquired her nickname as a girl through her rebuke to an Edinburgh minister for referring to her as "Betty Stirling." "'Mistress Betty,' or 'Miss Betty,' but certainly not 'Bare Betty.'"

CHRISTOPHER ST. JOHN

SOVIET SCIENCE

Soviet Science. By J. G. CROWTHER. *Routledge*. 12s. 6d.

The difference between Soviet science and the science of any other country, Mr. Crowther tells us, is to be found in its relation to the social life of the community which supports it. In Soviet Russia the prosecution of science is regarded as an indispensable element in the development of a modern civilised State. "The profound difference between Western European civilisation and that of the Soviet Union is that the governors of the former would not be embarrassed if they could ignore technological and scientific problems, while the latter would consider the notion of ignoring such problems fundamentally absurd." Western European States, in fact, accommodate themselves to science merely in so far as they have to; they do not try deliberately to build up a civilisation on scientific and technological considerations.

This contention seems to be very largely true. There is probably nothing in any Western European country which corresponds to the Russian State Planning Commission, a very large organisation with special universities for training its staff, and which already enjoys even more prestige than the Soviet Foreign Office. This organisation is planning the houses, clothes, food, transport and communications for a present population of one hundred and sixty millions and an estimated population, within the next forty years, of three hundred millions. For the realisation of these plans, huge industries are required, and these industries, in turn, depend on the results of scientific research. The Russian politicians are able to perceive this connection, and for that reason scientific research is one of the most honoured and encouraged activities in modern Russia. The purpose of Mr. Crowther's book is to give us a view of these activities, and to this end he takes us on a tour through something like thirty of these new scientific institutes.

The resultant impression is one of tremendous activity, but no ordinary reader will get any clear impression of what the activity is all about. Soviet science, he will gather, is as incomprehensible

as any other sort of science. Perhaps Mr. Crowther visited too many institutes and tries to tell us too much. We have pages and pages of this sort of thing :

> The catalysis of ammonia is being studied from several aspects. The photochemical reactions in solutions are another subject of investigation, and the general theory of chain reactions in solutions. They have studied the part of the electron in chemical processes, by classical, X-ray and Raman spectral methods. They have found that the movements of the electrons are related to the Langmuir absorption.

It would take a specialist to be interested in such notes, and no one specialist could be interested in all Mr. Crowther's notes, for they cover far too wide a field. Nevertheless, Mr. Crowther leavens his notes with a certain amount of "human interest" by describing the flats these scientists live in, the restaurants they dine in, and so on.

The fact that scientific research in Soviet Russia is so deliberately related to the social life of the community makes one wonder as to its purely scientific quality. Scientific work which is undertaken for practical purposes is hardly ever of first-rate importance, either for science or for practice. And there are indications here and there in Mr. Crowther's book that science in Russia suffers a little from its practical orientation. And there would seem to be, as one would expect, certain disadvantages attaching to the enthusiasm of the Russian temperament. Speaking of the Leningrad Physico-Technical Institute, Mr. Crowther says :

> Many of the highly gifted young physicists there tend to fly after the latest exciting world-discovery, and add a few embellishments to it, and then turn to the next, and add something to that. . . . But this spreading of interest makes the discovery of entirely new regions of physical knowledge more difficult. Until the Leningrad physicists concentrate more on a few regions of research it is improbable that they will become the world masters of any region.

And we are told, of the director of the Kharkov Institute : "He is anxious to improve the quality of research in the U.S.S.R., which is now the instruction of the party to scientists. Stunt research is to be avoided, and investigators are to learn to be more critical and exact. During the next years there will be less enthusiasm for monster apparatuses, and more for accuracy." But this capacity for enthusiasm, once it has been disciplined by the knowledge that Nature seldom yields to shock tactics, will obviously be as important for science as it has proved itself to be for all the other activities which have gone to create modern Russia. One cannot say as much about the concentration on practical problems. But this concentration is very natural, indeed inevitable, at the present time. And we may be confident that, once their most pressing and immediate practical problems are solved, the Russians, like everyone else, will realise that there is no clear line of demarcation between utilitarian and non-utilitarian science.

J. W. N. SULLIVAN

PRIVATE LIVES

The Silver Fleece. By ROBERT COLLIS. *Nelson.* 15*s.*
Suspect. By ALLAN STRAWBRIDGE. *Heinemann.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
The Last Landfall. By DESMOND MALONE. *Bles.* 10*s.* 6*d.*
Smell of Smoke. By BEN MAGNUS. *Duckworth.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

These autobiographies show that the increasing tempo of European history has abolished the distinction between pre- and post-war periods. Three of the authors are veterans of the last war, yet, as none of them is over forty, it would require an excessive optimism to assert that they will not be conscripts in the next.

Although the fourth, Dr. Collis, escaped active service, it was only by a few weeks. From his earliest boyhood he had two ambitions, to play Rugger for Ireland and to be a doctor, but when he was at Rugby and saw his friends one by one being sucked into the military machine, to reappear only as names in a commemoration service, he learned not to think about a future which would decide itself as soon as he was old enough to make a presentable corpse. As it happened, Dr. Collis was lucky. Before he had completed his education in the art of killing men the war ended and he was able to devote his life to curing them and, incidentally, to achieve both his ambitions. He reveals himself as a good-humoured and enthusiastic young man, never quite sure whether to be a hearty or an intellectual. At times his enthusiasm dulled his critical sense, as when he became one of Buchman's first English converts. A shrewd analysis of that opulent evangelist's methods is one of the high spots of the book, which is chiefly

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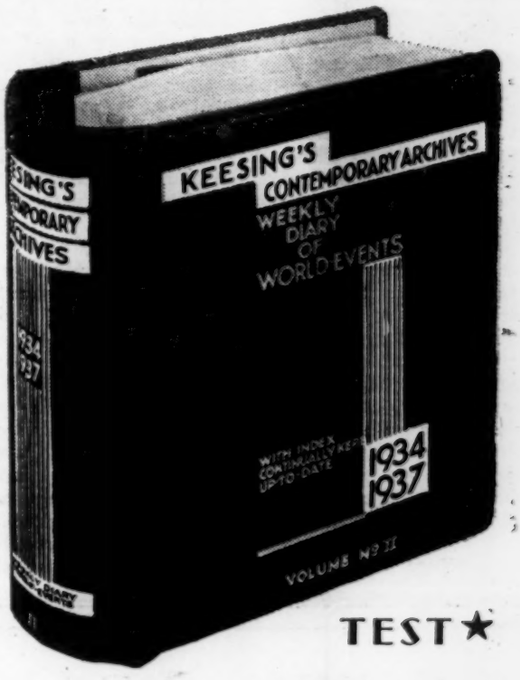

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concerned with student days at Cambridge, Yale and King's College Hospital. *The Silver Fleece* is a poor fifteen shillingsworth, but may be recommended for the library list.

Shortly before the war Allan Strawbridge, a young Australian of almost idyllic innocence, came to Europe to study art and developed a mania for getting mixed up with German spies. He was befriended by one in Paris and when he went to Luxemburg in 1914 promptly became acquainted with a second and fell in love with a third. This triple coincidence is a considerable strain on the reader's credulity, but as the author expressly avouches the truth of his story the gracious reader will suppress his scepticism. When the Germans invaded Luxemburg, Mr. Strawbridge was betrayed by his lover and arrested, his sketches of the frontier being construed in the most fantastic manner as evidence of connection with the French Intelligence. Throughout the war he remained in Germany as a "suspect," being treated with appalling cruelty and, when the revolution came to his rescue, years of constant bullying and privation had broken his will and ruined his health. In 1918 he found himself technically free but actually "still imprisoned within the cell of his ruined being." Those who are not irritated by the author's somewhat staccato prose will find *Suspect* an exciting narrative, horrifying in its revelation of the inhumanity which militarism imposes on its puppets.

Desmond Malone was another non-combatant who was made prisoner of war. He was more fortunate than Mr. Strawbridge and suffered chiefly from a uniform monotony, broken only by two attempts at escape which had ludicrous and unexpected results. *The Last Landfall* is a delightful book and the only one on this list with any claims to literary distinction. The author has a sense of style and an aptitude for characterisation which combine to make his story vital and interesting. He probably inherits this ability from his father, an Irishman serving in the London Police, who had a most unconstabulary taste in imaginative literature. Mr. Malone was intended for the priesthood and when he was thirteen was sent to a Jesuit College where he stayed until events convinced him that the vocation was lacking. Office work in London was equally distasteful and he eventually joined the merchant service as wireless operator. When his ship was torpedoed by a submarine he was picked up and kept aboard for a month before being interned in Brandenburg. A novice was ill-equipped to sustain the ardours of such an experience (on one occasion they lay for two days on the bed of the Irish Sea with depth-charges bursting perilously near) and his ears were affected so seriously that, years later, he lost his hearing completely. But this is by no means a war book. Mr. Malone writes sensitively of his unusual childhood and gives a long, amusing account of his adventures at sea.

Ben Magnus (alias Alexis Mahoff) thinks, "War is an indispensable law of equilibrium in man's existence." He ought to know. When he was a midshipman in the Russian Navy a sailor threw some food in his face; Mr. Magnus knifed him. Later we learn that the author (who also thinks, "the dearest thing in life is Life itself") first whipped, then shot, five Red prisoners. With experience his technique improved and he was able to dispense with a revolver, doing murder with the whip alone. *Smell of Smoke* is the most unpleasant book I have ever read, a rambling, patternless tale of senseless slaughter, intermingled with childish mysticism about Mother Russia. There is little comfort written in the map of Europe but we can at least thank our stars and the Red Army that Alexis Mahoff and his White comrades, whose behaviour filled even him with shame, failed in their bloody attempt to undo the work of 1917.

GEOFFREY PARSONS

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Thackeray, by the way, like Bennett lived in Paris for some time, whither he went in 1833 to study art. Like Bennett he was at his best in the long leisurely novel. He was also interested in art for he was an able caricaturist; unlike Bennett he could give himself up to long and painstaking research as of course in *The History of Henry Esmond.*

This, though an aside, fairly suggests what to expect from Mr. Simons. "The only sound critical instrument," I was once told, "is the comparison"—Mr. Simons makes full use of this instrument in its most primitive shape, so that his book often reminds one of a very conscientious school-essay. True, he sometimes lapses into the master; as, for instance, writing of *The Old Wives' Tale*—"The reader might compare the description of the execution with two particular pieces of prose devoted to executions. . . ." Bennett is placed side by side not merely with the novelists who influenced him, but with almost all eminent European novelists from Jane Austen to Proust, and usually rather to their disadvantage. "Where Bennett surpassed Flaubert is . . . Bennett is definitely superior to Zola, because. . . . Here Bennett's essential qualities of Five Towns' common sense enabled him to rise superior to the de Goncourts." We are given nearly everything that other critics have said about Bennett, and Mr. Simons appears to defer to them all, until they happen to say something unflattering: "Here," he objects firmly, "I entirely disagree." A half-concession is the most he will ever make to any hint that Bennett is not flawless, for example: "A critic has said of Bennett that there is a 'puffiness' about his style. . . . I do not think that this is true apart from the earlier work, and even there the conscious desire to achieve good literature emerges." (Save us from our friends!) To his hero's claims he will allow no limit, even in the nature of things: Mr. Forster says that "no novelist has dealt with babyhood except in an 'auntish' manner, and no author has dealt with the state after death, because it is impossible. But Bennett has done both. He has given us an amazing attempt at insight into an infant's mind in *The Old Wives' Tale*, and of a disembodied spirit in *The Glimpse*." To sum up—"Mr. Harvey Darton—and I fully agree with him—is of the opinion that had all of Bennett's novels been of the same quality as *The Old Wives' Tale*, then he would have recreated the English novel." Whatever that means.

Mr. Simons does not often venture into views of his own (which keeps his book rather short), but he is original enough at moments. "I can," he says, "pay no greater tribute to Bennett than by saying that in the portrayal of the grace of childhood he bears comparison with Lamb. . . . Only in one modern novel in particular have I found this power of the delineation of the child equalled." His command of language, it will be noticed, is not equal to his enthusiasm; and at times he does not appear to mean quite what he says. For instance, Bennett "at nineteen

MACMILLAN

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MACMILLAN

attracted by a prize of a guinea offered by the principal local paper . . . wrote a short story. He tells us that he never 'wanted to write' until the intrinsic advantages of writing presented themselves to him."

Mr. Simons has thrown away a very good opportunity—for, as the dust-cover reminds us, this is the first "complete study" of Arnold Bennett. Still it seems hard to be hard on him, for he is quite simple and unpretentious. If, in spite of industry, he makes rather a poor show, the age as well as his own disabilities should perhaps be blamed; our standards of writing and thinking are not high enough to afford any support to humble mediocrity. We exalt the limitations of the eighteenth century, but have few of its merits. K. JOHN

MORE PLANNING

Planning Under Capitalism. A. W. RATHER. *King*. 9*s*.
Planning Under Socialism. SIR WILLIAM BEVERIDGE. *Longmans*. 3*s*. 6*d*.

There is more likeness in the subject-matter of these two books than their titles would suggest. It is the nature of planning in general which interests both authors; it is only emphasis and treatment which differ, Mr. Rather providing, in the longer volume, much descriptive material as well as general argument, while *Planning Under Socialism*, the lecture which gives its title to Sir William Beveridge's lively little book, covers similar theoretical ground on a more abstract plane. Comparison is hard on Mr. Rather, for superior powers of exposition and the light touch of the experienced speaker and leader writer are here combined with just that logical grasp of essentials which *Planning Under Capitalism* lacks. Sir William Beveridge has set himself, too, a rather easier task; he offers no final judgment, but only a brief analysis and comparison of the problems confronting capitalist and socialist economies alike. Mr. Rather, attempting to answer the arguments both of "The Great Depression" and "Plan or No Plan," plumps for a judicious mingling of planning and autonomy on the lines of the present coal, milk and electricity schemes. To his mind these organisations have in their respective fields achieved the benefits of co-ordination without producing, in Mrs. Wootton's phrase, a community "more planned against than planning"; but the average housewife, with her eye on her coal, dairy and grocery bills, would hardly agree with him. His account of the economic forces hampering the would-be monopolist must appear sheer optimism to most economists, while the student of politics will not share his faith in the ultimate regulatory powers of Governments over vested interests. Comment on that faith is written large in the history of the sugar beet subsidy.

It is to Sir William Beveridge that the wise reader will turn if he wishes to see the question competently reduced to bare essentials. The cardinal faults of capitalism are liability to monetary disturbance, excessive inequality of income, and antagonism between partners in production. Its cardinal merits are flexibility and self-regulation. The cardinal difficulty in collectivism is its lack, even assuming a free market for consumption goods, of the automatic profit indicator which under capitalism guides the production of capital goods. The author does not dogmatise as to how far collectivist planning could overcome this difficulty, he refuses to dismiss the system as unworkable or doomed to failure; he merely indicates the problem. As to Socialism's power to do away with the three chief faults of Capitalism, he grants its theoretical ability to cope with the first, while holding that its practical difficulties would be much the same; on the second point the advantage is with collectivism, subject to due provision for saving; on the third problem, widened and altered to include the relations of central authority to special interests, Sir William Beveridge is less optimistic than Mr. Rather.

Few Socialists will quarrel with this diagnosis as far as it goes; and those who are inclined to brush aside the difficulties indicated as unimportant would be well advised to think again. On the other hand, Sir William Beveridge does no more than Mr. Rather to shake the conviction that our present anchylosed capitalism is rapidly losing the merits of *laisser faire* without acquiring those of collective planning.

The remainder of the book consists of reprints of short wireless talks given in the news hour on current economic topics, and of three school broadcasts. These are light, easy, illuminated by pleasant analogies, and fitter than most similar ephemera for the comparative immortality of book form. HONOR CROOME

THE FOOL HATH SAID

The Fool Hath Said. By BEVERLEY NICHOLS. *Cape*. 7*s*. 6*d*.

All those delicacies of style and imagery which Mr. Nichols has so pleasantly cultivated in his interpretation of rural England have at last been put to some more passionate use. For the critic owes it to the public to say at once that this is a fiery and tremendously sincere book about God, "that solitary fragrance" as Mr. Nichols calls Him, and about true virtue "that is like violets in a twilit lane."

A man in his profounder moments will always illustrate his truths from his own experience, with a candour that may upon occasion expose him to censure or ridicule. St. Augustine comes to mind at once. Mr. Nichols also gives us a moving account of his involuntary defection from grace, which occurred at Marlborough. One day he went into a quiet corner to read Shelley. He says:

> When I began to read it was a glorious afternoon. The sun poured down on the open pages. In the light of after events it seems symbolical that as I read on, the clouds began to gather outside, and darkness swept over the building, and a roll of thunder. Before I had finished, I had to turn on the lamp. I stayed there, bent on those pages in a sort of horrified, guilty satisfaction. . . . For I had opened the pages at Shelley's "Notes to Queen Mab."

In this book he traces, always with the reticence of good taste, the way of his re-conversion to religious belief, and particularly to a certain order of belief. He pleads Christ, and the complete surrender of one's individuality to Him, with a force and persistence that is surprising. And though his book is not specially devoted to the Oxford Group he presents their case with candour, lending it point with well-chosen anecdotes, mostly gathered during his attendance at a Group Conference. At this conference, a telegram was read from the Prime Minister of Canada "to the effect that *Canada is easier to govern since the visits of the Oxford Group*."

It is not only sincerity that Mr. Nichols employs, but reason,

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HUTCHINSON

often laid down in the propositional order recommended by logicians. Thus, on p. 37 :

> Man's nature was given to him by God.
> Man has a moral sense and a streak of cruelty.
> If God has not a moral sense, God gave man
> Something which He did not possess Himself,
> Which is absurd.
> Therefore, God has a moral sense.

The formal precision of this is convincing, even if one, for simplification, omits the words " streak of cruelty " as Mr. Nichols does. Their insertion, however, cannot mar the impressiveness of the spectacle of Man, so made erect by Faith, that he can confront the Lord God of Sabaoth, around Whom the shining choirs of Seraphim and Cherubim eternally do cry Holy, Holy, Holy, with a proof that He has a moral sense.

Besides passion and logic, however, the author employs wholesome practical sense and psychological insight. He knows, for instance, that the soul of a gentle and elderly lady is worth as much as that of a docker, a clerk, a declining Old Boy, or a crossword enthusiast. Reasoning that, just possibly, there will be one or two old ladies among his readers, he first takes the problem of evil at the level of the old lady whose cat has caught a mouse. By way of commentary on the morning's psalm he asks, " Do mice go to Heaven ? " Again, he says of Shelley's definition of prayer that " it might sound very well in the Lower Fourth but was not the sort of thing you would expect from a member of the Upper Sixth." He clinches another stage in his argument with homely derision :

> We have, therefore, arrived at the position of an atheist who is doing a crossword puzzle, in which one of the words is GOD. If he will only write down that word, the uprights and the horizontals fall into place automatically. . . . The puzzle is solved. . . . But unfortunately, he is an atheist, and there is no such word in his vocabulary. And therefore he has to cross out the " precious metal " in four letters, beginning with G, which ought to be " gold," and the interjection in two letters which is obviously " Oh " and the " evil spirit " in five letters which is obviously " Devil," and sit there twiddling his thumbs, because he will not admit that the " Ruling Spirit of the Universe," in three letters, beginning with G, is GOD. If it were in four letters he might make it GOAT, which would fit in most admirably with his philosophy. But unfortunately it's only in three. A damnable Trinity, tripping him up.

It can safely be said that *almost the whole* of the book reaches this level.

Mr. Nichols is always ready with explanation and suggestion ; it is a simple faith he pleads, but one not too simple, for doubt has its significance in the world—" In a doubtless World all merit would be taken from faith, all glory from virtue," and in a " World without Doubt Christ would descend with a sickening thud to the level of a policeman." Thus Man in conquering doubt preserves God's dignity, or if this seems to approach blasphemy, God maintains His dignity by permitting man to doubt. But not too profound or permanent a doubt, of course, for Mr. Nichols is well able to avoid Shelley's error in " Notes to Queen Mab," where he says that God gave man his nature and then damned him for being so.

I must repeat, everything in *The Fool Hath Said* is said with all the resources of wit, courage, sincerity and style which distinguish his other books. Perhaps it is symbolical that when I began to read it the thunder was reverberating in the lightning-ripped sky. But now the sun is shining, and I am going into the fragrant woods, to pick an anemone.

RALPH BATES

THE FIRST KING OF THE BELGIANS

Uncle Leopold. By ANGUS HOLDEN. *Hutchinson.* 18*s.*

The outward circumstances of the life of King Leopold I may be briefly set down. He was born in 1790 and was a younger son of Prince Francis of Saxe-Coburg. At the age of twenty-five he married Princess Charlotte of England, who but for her death in childbirth in the following year would one day have been our queen. In 1831 he became the first king of the Belgians and retained his throne until his death thirty-five years later. He had his finger in every political pie during this period, and—what is of particular interest to English readers—he was the uncle of both Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort.

Mr. Holden's monograph on this interesting subject is attractively produced and attractively set forth. It includes eight illustrations in black and white and a coloured frontispiece, the latter reproduced from an amusing caricature dated 1841 and designed to pour scorn on the artistic and musical accomplishments of the Queen, Prince Albert and their royal guests at Windsor. The frontispiece may be taken as affording an earnest of the many delightful rewards that Mr. Holden's readers will find in the pages of his book. He is most conscientious in his treatment of the various political complications that arose to trouble the peace of nineteenth-century Europe, and his lucid explanations and lively comments should render the pages devoted to the historical background of his work eminently easy to digest.

As a human being, King Leopold was almost consistently unattractive ; he was genuinely devoted to the Princess Charlotte, however, and would have liked when he eventually died fifty years later to have been buried beside her. Fate ordained otherwise, in spite of the sympathy of Queen Victoria. Mr. Holden regrets that his heart was not, after the ancient fashion, removed to Windsor, to rest beside his only love, but he produces no evidence to suggest that this particular regret would have been likely to be shared by the unromantic Leopold himself.

His importance to his own country was inestimable and he was little less important to the history of England. He was largely responsible for Queen Victoria's marriage to Prince Albert and also through Stockmar for the eventual part that the Prince Consort played with such thorough success ; it was further at his suggestion that Alexandra of Denmark was chosen to be the wife of the Prince of Wales.

Leopold's private life was not impeccable, and Mr. Holden writes with sense and wit on this subject. On the occasion of the Czar's visit to Windsor in 1844 the Queen wrote to her uncle : " His admiration for beauty is very great . . . and puts me much in mind of you, when he drove out with us, looking out for pretty people." Mr. Holden comments : " It is to be hoped that the unconscious irony of the Queen's observations did not escape her uncle's notice." On another occasion " she wrote to her uncle saying that, owing to her aversion to hunting, she was delighted to hear that he had shot fifty-one foxes in a day." This book is full of such enchantments.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 319

Set by G. W. Stonier

At the recent exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House, one lady, after peering at an exhibit and studying the catalogue, remarked to another lady: "5,000 B.C., my dear. Now why didn't they find things like that in England in 5,000 B.C.?" The usual prizes will be offered for the best bloomer of this sort—foolish or charming, or both—preferably taken from life. To contributors who are ashamed of being autobiographical I may mention that during my first visit to Paris I went with an aunt to the Place de la Bastille and asked the gendarme on point duty to indicate the Bastille. He replied, "It *was* there."

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, May 1st.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 317

Set by Allan M. Laing

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, answering a question in the House of Commons the other day, intimated that the Government could not afford to provide British beef for soldiers, sailors and airmen. The usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half-a-Guinea) are offered for a Patriotic Ballade on this subject, with the refrain: "We can't afford to give them British beef."

Report by Allan M. Laing

(Since Mr. Cyril Connolly's novel method seems appropriate on this occasion, I'll make use of it, if he doesn't mind.)

Well, boys and girls, I'm not at all pleased with you. In spite of all the lessons you've had, nearly 40 per cent. of you don't know yet what a ballade is. As I read your names out, please go and stand in the corner. . . . Now, listen! Please get it out of your heads that a ballade is any sort of imitation of Kipling at his rum-tum-tummiest. It isn't. Neither is it a music-hall ditty, nor an ex-serviceman's door-to-door broadsheet (sans rhyme, sans form, sans common sense). When I ask you for a ballade I want three stanzas of eight lines each and an envoy of four, with a rhyme-scheme of *a, b, a, b, b, c, b, c*. And since the refrain I gave you had ten syllables, each of the other lines should have ten, too. The last hint is intended for you, Macgregor, and you, Innes.

As for the rest of you, I am sorry to say you have, for once, been too well behaved. Heaven help me! I give you a subject full of really juicy possibilities, and most of you get up solemnly and sing "God Save the King!" On the whole your patriotism lacks punch and your irony is the kind that lies too deep for jeers. But I mustn't be too hard on you: there are mitigations. Upward is his usual neat but not gaudy self. Fordham's sarcasm is perhaps a little obvious, but his two efforts are among the best. I like Broadbent's envoy, and if W. R. Y. will avoid inversions he will soon be approaching (shall I say?) the realms of Bliss. You need not smile, boys and girls, if I have told you that one before. Pitman has written an excellent ballade and, among the girls, Joan Hyde has done very well indeed, and so has the completely anonymous girl who writes on the beautiful blue notepaper.

Now for results. I see Bliss is already at the top of the class: he had better stay there; and you, R. D. C., move up to second place. There's a line in your third stanza, R. D. C., that I don't like at all. You'll know the one I mean. Silence, please, for the winning entries! First Prize: William Bliss; Second Prize: R. D. C.

FIRST PRIZE

Hear it not, Grenville, Hawkins, Raleigh, Drake!
Rest, rest ye English Admirals, happy dead!
Collingwood, Rodney, Abercrombie, Blake,
Who fought for England and for England bled,
Sleep sound—for Britain's sovranty is sped!
She in her Commons' House—oh! past belief!
Has of her hungry sailor heroes said—
"We can't afford to give them British beef."

Did I hear rightly?—"Do I sleep or wake?"—
Once, when in France the People had no bread,
"Let them," said Marie Antoinette, "eat cake."
For that, poor foolish Queen, she lost her head.
More lingering be *his* fate, more fraught with dread,
Who, like some lawyer speaking to his brief,
This pickthank plea for parsimony pled—
"We can't afford to give them British beef!"

Were Nelson living his great heart would break.
What?—shall the men with whom his blood he shed
Go wanting that which British blood should make?
They whom on Trafalgar's great day he led
Be grudged right British food and giv'n instead
Poor foreign stuff? Oh! is there no relief?
Must this as Britain's Epitaph be read—
"We can't afford to give them British beef?"

ENVOY

Prince, "roll the Map up!" Britain's fame is fled.
Cry "Ichabod!" and bow your head in grief.
"The hungry Tars look up and are not fed!"
We can't afford to give them British beef.

WILLIAM BLISS

SECOND PRIZE

BALLADE OF INAPPROPRIATE COMMISSARIAT

Captains from whom the broken armies fled,
Caesar and Alexander, where are they?
Where are the endless legions of the dead,
The immortal rearguard under Marshal Ney?
These are a long time dead and turned to clay:
Enough for them the withered laurel leaf;
Shall it be said of those who live to-day
We can't afford to give them British beef?

An Army (Julius C., or someone said)
Marches upon its belly. Does it? Nay!
It rides in buses on a rubber tread,
Launching attacks a hundred miles away:
Or, climbing into aeroplanes, it may
Fall on the foe in silence, like a thief;
But still it needs *one* solid meal a day:
We can't *afford* to give them British beef.

. . . Damme, Sir, what can they eat instead?
Nut cutlets, or a truss or two of hay?
We've put up in our time with native bread,
And cattle on the hoof, in Mandalay;
But here, at home, in English depots, eh?
War House muckin' about's beyond belief . . .
It's quite enough to turn the Colonel grey:
We can't afford to give them British beef.

ENVOI.

Prince, long retired to Wiltshire on half-pay,
Please don't assume I can't respect your grief
(Another glass of port?) to hear them say
We can't afford to give them British beef.

R. D. C.

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CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 174.—WHO KILLED HOOPINKOFF?

(A "thriller" by A. G. Stripp)

When the 11.0 p.m. train from Victoria arrived at Balham on the night of November 31st, 1935, the body of Professor Hoopinkoff was found in an otherwise empty compartment. He had been stabbed through the heart. A doctor who examined the body at nineteen minutes past eleven said that death must have been instantaneous and had occurred a quarter of an hour earlier. The opinion of this doctor may be taken as being entirely reliable.

Scotland Yard detectives, investigating the crime, find that Hoopinkoff left Waterloo by the 10.49 train. They also think that the murderer is one of the three notorious spies, Alcoholi, Benzolini, and Champagni; and they are right in thinking so. The following facts have been established:

Alcoholi and Benzolini left Wandsworth Common together by the 10.46 train on the night of the crime. The ticket collector on duty at the barrier at Clapham Junction is certain that neither of the men left the train there. Alcoholi, however, was seen in the subway at Clapham Junction at about eight minutes past eleven. With regard to Benzolini, a witness whose evidence is quite trustworthy has informed the police that while waiting for a friend outside Battersea Park Station from five minutes to eleven until three minutes past eleven that night he saw Benzolini (of whose identity he is certain) entering the station in the company of another man—not Alcoholi—at eleven o'clock. On the other hand, a porter at Queen's Road Station (about five minutes' walk away from Battersea Park Station) is prepared to swear that Benzolini caught the 11.9 train from there and that he was alone at the time.

Champagni left Clapham Junction by train at 10.43, but was seen again in the subway there at eleven o'clock.

All three of the suspects arrived by train at Putney at 11.16.

The following is a time-table of all the trains that need to be considered in a reconstruction of the movements of the characters in the crime:

Balham ..	..	10.44	10.56	Victoria ..	11.0	11.8
Wandsworth Common		10.46	10.58	Battersea Park ..	11.3	—
Clapham Junction	..	10.49	11.1	Clapham Junction	11.6	11.14
Battersea Park	..	10.52	11.4	Wandsworth Common	11.9	—
Victoria ..	..	10.56	11.8	Balham	11.11	11.18

Waterloo ..	10.49	11.0	11.3	Putney	—	10.58
Vauxhall ..	10.52	—	11.6	Clapham Junc.	10.43	11.3
Queen's Road	10.55	—	11.9	Queen's Road ..	—	11.6
Clapham Junc.	10.58	11.8	11.12	Vauxhall ..	10.48	11.9
Putney ..	11.2	—	11.16	Waterloo ..	10.52	11.13

It has been ascertained from the Southern Railway authorities that all the trains mentioned in the above time-table ran punctually to time on the night of the murder with the exception of the train due in at Victoria at 10.56. This train was held up outside Victoria Station for four minutes.

Who killed Hoopinkoff, and what were the circumstances?

PROBLEM 172.—DATES

The required year is 1233. Several competitors ask, "Why was it important?" I write from memory, but was it not the birth-year of Nicolas Pretzal?

PROBLEM 171.—ADVENTURE ISLAND

There were 15,621 *doubloons in the original treasure.* This "old friend in a new setting" has attracted a large entry.

PROBLEM 170.—THE PROBLEM OF KING NUMERICUS

Not a single correct solution, i.e. 100 points to me. This has never happened before.

The solution is as follows. The numbers of the anniversaries of Special Rejoicing all consist of numbers equal to $a + b + c$ where a, b, c are in geometrical progression. The anniversaries of Extra Special Rejoicing are, therefore, obviously, numbers of this form not already included in the Proclamation.

The object of this problem was to see how many solvers could attain an objective by purely speculative analysis, i.e., without the guidance of a specific clue. I am rather surprised that no one at all succeeded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

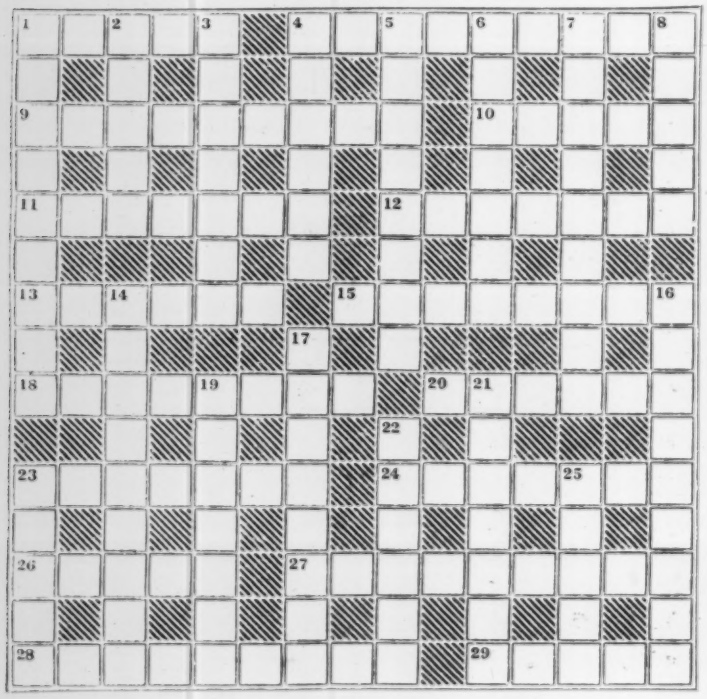
A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope; but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution. CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 320

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday. Prize-winners should address their claims to the Editor.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Ernest Carr, Lyndall, Forest Drive, Kingswood, Surrey

ACROSS

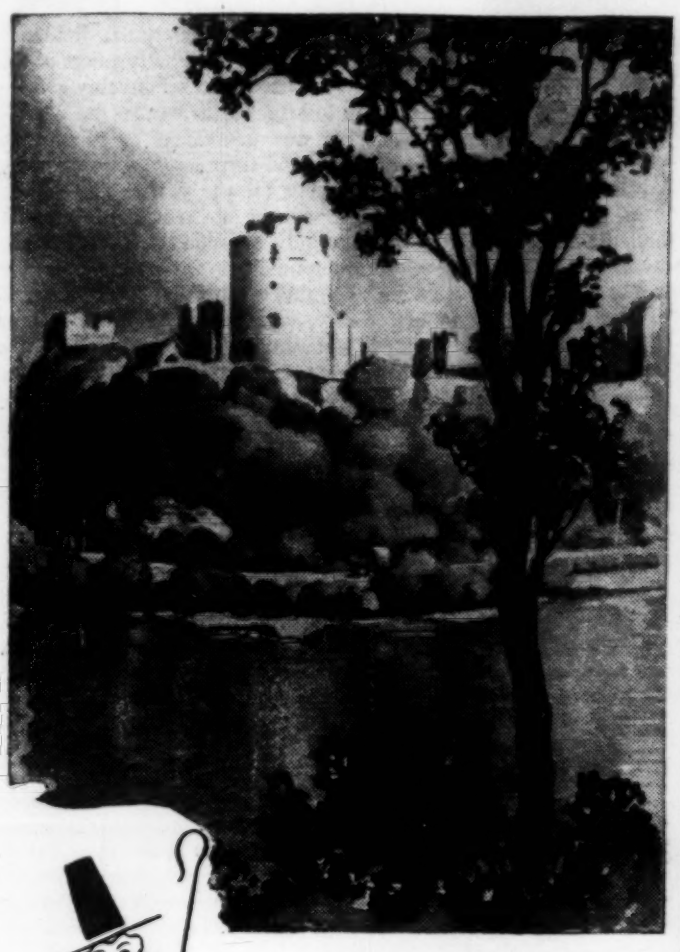
1. There's a bee on the flower.
4. Constant appearance of the Lotos Eaters' land.
9. Taken below it would seem
10. 100 to 1 on Edward.
11. They are never story tellers.
12. Portmanteau version of a professional offer perhaps.
13. Open (and shut) the shutter.
15. The rules for fighting and love making.
18. His job seems to be to keep the animals from being disorderly.
20. A Peke asked to drink.
23. Treaty that revived the temporal power of the Papacy.
24. Fruity forerunner.
26. Close to the base of the pedestal.
27. Everyone inside and I keep the guard company.
28. They get hipped in the fall.
29. Sites for temporary castles.

DOWN

1. Vegetable produced by the Abbé Rodan.
2. Works with a rope musically.
3. Suitably disposes of 11.
4. How Edward VIII would go begging.
5. An upright supporter when one is "canvassing."
6. How scorers go over it again.
7. Uncontrolled condition of the bird in the bush.
8. Lowest Afghan Khan.
14. They support vegetarian risings.
16. Composed of companies that are mostly private.
17. Sounds like a suit of armour.
19. Its home is seasonably jolly.
21. Oils religiously.
22. A word coined by the Greeks.
23. He foots the bill.
25. Take a spin round a foreign land.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

■	■	S	M	A	S	H	A	N	D	G	R	A	B	
■	■	S	■	O	■	T	■	W	■	O	■	E	■	U
■	S	T	A	N	Z	A	■	A	L	C	O	H	O	L
C	■	R	■	O	■	L	■	R	■	K	■	O	■	L
R	O	U	N	D	H	E	A	D	■	S	N	U	F	F
I	■	C	■	I	■	M	■	■	■	■	S	■	I	
C	A	K	E	S	T	A	N	D	■	T	S	E	U	G
K	■	■	T	■	T	■	E	■	N	■	■	H		
E	P	Y	L	S	■	E	X	T	R	E	M	I	S	T
T	■	A	■	■	■	■	O	■	D	■	N	■	E	
P	O	W	E	R	■	D	E	N	O	U	N	C	E	R
I	■	E	■	H	■	E	■	A	■	R	■	U	■	S
T	O	P	S	O	I	L	■	T	I	P	P	L	E	■
C	■	O	■	D	■	T	■	E	■	M	■	T	■	■
H	O	R	S	E	M	A	N	S	H	I	P	■	■	■



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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THE BUDGET'S RECEPTION—MEXICAN EAGLE—SHELL UNION AND NEW YORK—RHODESIAN COPPER SHARES

THE Stock Exchange, curiously enough, liked the Budget. However patriotic we may feel, it is our pockets which ultimately govern our feelings. No wealthy surtax payer is greatly worried by 3*d.* on the income tax and, of course, he will never know that 2*d.* a pound has been added to tea. On the other hand, as a dealer in stocks and shares he will be anticipating greater capital appreciation from his holdings of iron and steel, shipbuilding and aircraft shares. Moreover, he can look forward to a defence loan next year, for the Chancellor has promised that in future years part of the defence expenditures will be met by borrowing. From the Stock Exchange point of view, rearmament is the most attractive form of Government loan expenditure. But the stockbroker's view is not the poor man's. The increase in the income tax will fall most heavily on the smaller incomes, and the tax on tea will hit the poorest of working people. If the Chancellor's object was to lay the cost of rearmament fairly on all classes of the population I doubt whether he succeeds. It is always a little suspicious to see the Stock Exchange welcome a Budget. Personally, I think it would have been fairer to have provided for the entire cost of rearmament by issuing a ten-year loan, that is, a loan carrying a small rate of interest and a heavy sinking fund. In October last, when a £200 millions defence loan was being discussed, I suggested 2½ per cent. ten-year bonds at 99 with a sinking fund of 8.925 per cent., making the total service of the loan £21¾ millions a year. I would regard that as sound finance —and much more equitable to the poor black-coated worker and the trade unionist.

* * *

The excitement of the week has been the rise in Mexican Eagle. These 8*s.* shares quietly advanced last week on insiders' buying from 12*s.* 6*d.* to 15*s.* 6*d.* Over the week-end came the announcement that the Amatlan lawsuit had been settled, and the shares opened on Monday at 17*s.* and advanced rapidly to 20*s.* 6*d.* Every professional in Throgmorton Street helped himself freely to shares. The technical position may not, therefore, be very sound, but ignoring temporary fluctuations I think the market is justified in being bullish about Mexican Eagle. The lawsuit brought by the illegitimate offspring of a former owner of one of the company's properties has been the excuse for extreme—I would almost say, for ridiculous—conservatism on the part of the directors. For two and a half years they passed the preference dividend, although the company had plenty of cash in the bank to meet it and a surplus of liquid assets amounting to £4,647,000, sufficient to cover the entire preference share capital more than three times over. An announcement about the payment of the arrears of preference dividend should therefore be made at an early date. As for the ordinary shares of 8*s.* at 20*s.* 6*d.*, there are several facts to be borne in mind. (1) The company has proved oil reserves greater in extent than at any previous time in its history. Its output of crude oil in 1935 increased by 21.3 per cent., and in the first eleven weeks of this year the increase in output has been 33.4 per cent. (2) The statement regarding the settlement of the lawsuit contained the important announcement that the difficulties which the company had been experiencing with the Mexican Government in connection with concessions and titles were "in a fair way towards settlement." It is too early to estimate earnings, but in view of the rise in oil prices and the increase in output, I expect the company to show earnings this year sufficient to justify a higher price for the shares. Of course, there are still political risks in Mexico—though they are no greater than, and perhaps even less than, the political risks of Venezuela—but a company which values its oil rights for balance sheet purposes at 2*s.* will not risk its shareholders' money unduly.

* * *

The Shell Union Oil Corporation is another member of the Royal Dutch-Shell group which treats its preference shareholders abominably. Shell Union preferred dividends have not been paid since July 1st, 1931, and at March 31st the dividend arrears amounted to $10,450,000 or $26.125 per share. Yet last year the regular preferred dividends, requiring $2,200,000 a year, were earned three times over. The Company has now converted its 5 per cent. debentures into fifteen year 3½ per cent. debentures and has cleared the deficit from its balance sheet. What possible excuse can the directors advance for withholding regular dividends any longer from the preferred shareholders? The earnings of the Company in the first quarter of 1936 have been remarkably good—a profit of $1,681,984 against a loss of $1,121,040 in the corresponding quarter of 1935. This was equivalent to nine cents per common share and it would not be surprising to see earnings advance to $1.20 per common share for the year. The 5½ per cent. preferred shares are now quoted at 116 (cum. arrears) and the common at 17¾. I cannot advise a sale of either, but the directors do not deserve the compliment. Oil shares generally are emerging from the earnings-ratio test, which Wall Street is now applying in a fit of sobriety, with flying colours. Not so the shares of some building equipment, light steel and motor accessory companies. There has recently been price-cutting in these industries which has played havoc with current earnings. Professionals in New York are now exercising extreme caution in the selection of common stocks and I still advise taking part profits on bursts of strength.

* * *

There may be a further rise in the price of American copper, but investors should not expect a copper boom. The Kennecott Copper Corporation has merely met the increase from 9¼ to 9½ cents per pound made by its rivals Anaconda and Phelps Dodge on February 15th. There has been a seasonal increase in American consumption and the market is looking forward to a further expansion in demand this year, for replacements by the public utilities cannot be long delayed. In London it is said that consumers who have been cut of the market since the end of the "war boom" in October are now being forced to restock. The most pleasing feature of the copper situation is the extraordinary friendliness of the producers. Even the recalcitrant Chairman of the International Nickel Company recently spoke in praise of co-operation among copper producers.

Statistical Assistant: This is where I come in. Current trends in the copper market lend some point to a recalculation of current earnings of the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia. Although the advance in the American price is of no direct concern to the Empire copper producers, since the U.S.A. copper industry is virtually isolated from the rest of the world by the tariff and the agreed restriction on exports, news from America may be a considerable stimulus to the market. The price of the metal, partly as a result of rearmament, has risen very materially over the past year, and there are some grounds for the expectation that the production quotas will be raised, for stocks outside America do not appear excessive. To low-cost producers such as those in Northern Rhodesia an increase in the quota is of greater importance than an increase in the price. Roan Antelope in the last six months of 1935 made a profit, after interest and depreciation, of £236,000 or £9⅜ per ton. Copper prices are now about £4 per ton higher and current profits may be estimated at about £13½ per ton. Mufulira earnings are less easily calculable, since the mine has only recently attained production. The present quota of 28,000 tons will be increased to 41,500 tons as from October 1st, 1937, and there is no reason to suppose that the costs per ton will exceed those of Roan Antelope. 64 per cent. of the Mufulira shares are owned by Rhodesian Selection Trust, the shares of which are held by the public. The last of the triumvirate is Rhokana, which owns, in addition to its own mines, one-third of Mufulira, and produced in 1935 700,000 lbs. of cobalt. The earnings of the three companies together with the yields at current market prices are as follows:

	Current earnings* after interest, depreciation, etc. (000's omitted)	Earnings if output is increased by 10% (000's omitted)	Present price	Yield on current earnings %	On increased quota. %
Roan Antelope shares 5*s.* ...	£688—44%	£839—54%	39/-	£5 13 0	£6 18 0
Rhodesian Selection Trust shares 5*s.* current quota ...	£152—6%	—			
Full quota from 1st Oct., 1937 ...	£375—16%	£454—19%	13/-	£6 3 0	£7 6 0
Rhokana shares £1	£925—38%	£1,100—45%	6⅝	£5 18 0	£7 0 0

* Allowing for an increase in the price of copper of £4 per ton.

Toreador: My choice is Rhokana. And do not forget the shares of Selection Trust which I have previously analysed and recommended.

* * *

Agony Column: I greatly regret that I am unable to reply to personal investment inquiries from correspondents but where they have problems which they regard as of general "reader" interest I shall be happy to discuss them in these columns.

Company Meeting

EAGLE, STAR AND BRITISH DOMINIONS INSURANCE COMPANY

Increased Profits, Assets and Dividend

PRESIDING at the Annual General Meeting of the Eagle, Star and British Dominions Insurance Company Limited, held on Tuesday last, Sir Edward Mountain, Bart, J.P., in moving the adoption of the Report and Accounts, said they continued to feel the increasing prosperity of the country and the results of the past year were good.

LIFE DEPARTMENT

The Life Department had shown excellent and progressive results. New policies were issued numbering 2,454 for sums assured of £2,854,936 of which £100,256 was re-assured and £2,754,680 retained. These figures compared with £2,404,263 retained in 1934, an increase of £350,417. Their Life business was confined to the United Kingdom, with a trifling exception in South Africa. The current Life Assurance and Annuity Funds expanded during the year by over £411,000 and now stood at £6,357,479, while the premium income of the Current Fund exceeded that of last year by over £19,000. The average rate of interest earned was £4 4s. 4d. per cent., after deduction of Income Tax, which he was sure they would consider favourable.

The number of schemes handled by their Group Life and Group Pensions Department continued to increase. For several years the number of new schemes had exceeded the previous year's figures and 1936 had started extremely well. The valuations of the two Closed Funds of the Eagle and English and Scottish were made at December 31st last, with very good results. In the case of the Eagle Fund, the surplus revealed enabled the declaration of a simple reversionary bonus at the remarkable rate of 10 per cent. per annum, whilst in the English and Scottish Fund a compound bonus of 3 per cent. had been declared. The bonuses allotted to English and Scottish policies since the date of the amalgamation with the Eagle Star Company ranged from 75 per cent. to 95 per cent. of the sums assured and bonuses existing at that time. The Shareholders' proportion of the profits from these Funds recently declared amounted to £72,275.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

In the Fire Department the premium income amounted to £808,087. The incurred loss ratio was 40 per cent., the ratio to premiums earned being 39.77 per cent. These percentages were 2.76 per cent. and 3.11 per cent. lower than in 1934. The profit for the year was £70,139, or 8.68 per cent. of the premium income, the total reserve being £423,235, which amounted to 52.37 per cent. of the premiums.

GENERAL DEPARTMENT

In the General Insurance Department the premiums amounted to £424,118, an increase of £26,000. Claims paid and outstanding amounted to £117,080, and after setting aside the usual reserve of 40 per cent. in respect of unexpired risks, the sum of £110,676 was transferred to Profit and Loss Account. These results were the best the Company had so far experienced in the General Account.

In the Motor Department the premium income amounted to £1,465,318 which showed an increase of £322,271. After providing for the outstanding claims and the usual reserve of 40 per cent. for unexpired risks the sum of £17,661 was transferred to Profit and Loss Account. These results proved that the public were being extremely well catered for and were getting their insurance at approximately cost price.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

The Credit Balance brought in from last year was £214,138 and the net interest on investments amounted to £230,431. Trusteeship and other fees were £6,816 and the net profit on the sale of investments totalled £56,111. The Shareholders' proportion of the Eagle and English and Scottish Funds Valuation profits was £72,275, which, with the profits from the trading departments, £236,502, made £816,273.

After providing for British and other Taxation and Expenses not charged elsewhere, they had paid an increased dividend on the Ordinary Shares of 25 per cent., which, with the dividends on the Preference and Preferred Ordinary Shares, absorbed £228,426 net. The total dividend on all classes of shares was more than covered by the net interest from investments alone and more than twice by the total net profits.

Of the balance remaining they decided to write off the cost of Life Businesses acquired the sum of £100,000, reducing that item now to £145,000 and to transfer £100,000 on account of provision for Pensions, leaving a credit balance to be carried forward of £257,264, being an increase of £43,127 on the amount brought in.

The total premium income for 1935 amounted to £4,089,433, as compared with £3,774,535 in 1934, an increase of £314,898, while the total assets of the Company and its subsidiaries stood at £23,691,499, an increase of £1,057,387.

In conclusion, he stated the financial position of the Company was outstandingly strong, that the new year had opened very promisingly and that he looked forward with every confidence to the future.

The Report and Accounts were unanimously adopted.

TO STIMULATE TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT

In spite of the rise that has taken place over the past 12 months the yield of industrial equities, according to the Actuaries Investment Index number, has fallen, thanks to higher dividends, only very slightly, the figure being 3.48, against 3.68 per cent. a year ago. If the main object of managed money be to stimulate trade and employment surely it is more desirable that investors should prefer industrial securities—a rise in which stimulates new enterprise and the raising of fresh capital—to fixed interest-bearing stocks.

The Times, 21st February 1936

THE FOUR PORTFOLIOS of the BRITISH INDUSTRIES FIXED TRUSTS include shares in 100 selected companies which are spread widely so that a purchaser of sub-units can obtain an interest in the best of British Industry. Each portfolio contains twenty-five securities with ten alternatives. The Midland Bank Executor and Trustee Co., Ltd., issues certificates to holders, collects the dividends on the securities, and pays out the proportionate amount due to sub-unit holders eight times a year.

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